

REGULATION OF VIOLENT MASCULINITIES IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD OF THE CROATIAN HOMELAND WAR

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Abstract

This paper problematizes the shifts in hegemonic masculine practices, which were strongly linked to nationalism discourses, from those performed by the male soldiers in the Croatian Homeland War (1991-1995). This process is followed through the period of post-war when other legitimate masculine practices gain hegemonic status. This analysis is done through a biopolitical lens and views the periods of war and post-war by introducing theoretical frameworks of sovereign power and bare life which are used to account for shifts in the masculine practices. The paper argues that the post-war period favors practices connected to economic discourses of the pre-war period which open up possibilities for those subjects who were performing middle class masculinities in the pre-war period. Furthermore the insights into these processes are made by analyzing the dominant discourses of the pre-war, war and post-war periods. These discourses are drawn out of the media, literature dealing with the Homeland War but also through analyzing interviews conducted with soldier and peace activists during a three month period in 2012.

Key words: masculinity, nationalism, biopolitics, violent conflict

Introduction

This thesis is motivated by my long fascination with nationalism. While I was younger while watching Croatian sport teams and sport stars like Goran Ivanišević¹ and Janica Kostelić² I always felt pride and connection to these people, although I never meet them. I perceived them as a part of a larger community of which I was a part of. In my academic career is started to get interested in the nationalism from an analytical standpoint, and was influenced by antinationalist theorists in my university. I noticed also that gender is a useful analytical tool through which nationalism could be looked at due to its appeal to, and justification for violent practices by, men. In that sense this thesis is a analysis of the men who most intensively, positively or negatively, responded to nationalist discourses which were dominating the 1990s Yugoslav context, and my more specific interest is the violent practices of the Croatian men during the partition of Yugoslavia.

What is lacking in research on the Croatian context is an analysis of masculinities through a lens which creates a more complex and layered analysis of Croatian masculinity and struggles for a hegemonic position within these masculinities, as opposed to the one which only shows the monolithic view of it as being in a hegemonic position towards all femininities. Furthermore I wish to expand on the theories of nationalism and gender by applying the wider biopolitical framework presented by Foucault (1997.). Specifically I will use it to connect the specific discourses of nationalism and masculinities and show how they are used to regulate the population. To explain the specificities of war time processes I will use insights from Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben and their interpretation of the state of exception, and how it creates a situation where sovereign power through, what Foucault calls,

¹ 2001. Wimbledon tennis champion

² Multiple Skiing Olympic medalist and multiple overall Crystal globe winner

regulatory and disciplinary regimes creates a situation where certain Croatian males are more likely to go to war and die for the nation.

In this sense I argue that the pre-war masculine practices largely connected to class statuses (lower-class and middle class) regulate which parts of the population will be more likely to go to the front line. As I will show this is due to their sense of masculinity being called into question within the Croatian context is in the period of the state of exception negotiating a new kind of citizenship which is based on ethnicity as being the citizenship norm. Throughout the thesis I will question what kind of values these men prescribe to as the basis of their practices and how does this fit in the biopolitical regime. Also I will be looking at the motives of the men who resisted the dominant nationalistic discourse of the Croatian state, questioning their standing and motives within the Croatian society. I will show that the conforming or resisting masculine practices are not all clear cut practices but that they are intersected by other spheres of practices such as the economy and education.

In the first chapter of my thesis I will set up the Croatian context of the last few decades which will give me access to specificities of the practices of the subjects of my research. The method will be using discourse analysis of interviews with war veterans and peace activists who were actively being involved in conforming or resisting nationalistic discourses of masculinity during the period of war in Croatia (1991-1995). The second chapter will set up a theoretical framework in which the gender and nationalist practices are positioned, and I will show how they can be viewed as hegemonic during the period of violent conflict. These practices are limited by the biopolitical regime which can be viewed as the dominant way of societal function in modern liberal states. After setting up the discursive context in the third chapter I will analyze the narratives of people involved in the war, the ambiguous position of soldiers who accept the dominant nationalistic discourse and the resistance to the nationalistic

discourses from other men. Finally the fourth chapter will show the current discursive climate of the Croatian society, and how it creates problematic positions for ex-soldiers. In this section the issues of class will be discussed, or rather how pre-war hegemonic practices are being reinstated in the post-war period.

1. Reconstructing History through Academic and Media Discourses: Setting Up the Context for Conducting Qualitative Research

When entering the Croatian context as a researcher, certain caution should be taken. Usually it is very easy for a researcher doing qualitative research (even a native one) to view another (his own) culture through a negative and generalizing lens, and in this case through a lens of orientalism.³ This can also be viewed as useful in order to see how these representations influence the production of categories and practices within the society from which the researcher comes from, and the society she or he is researching.

Authors like Todorova warn not to be overzealous to analytically equate the terms orientalism and balaknism. In that context she states that “Balkanism evolved to a great extent independently from orientalism and in certain aspects, against and despite it.” (Todorova, 2009: 20) She continues to argue that in a geopolitical sense the Balkans are different from the “Oriental” regions because they lack the colonial legacy. Also the negative meaning of balakanism has evolved from the unrealized expectations of the Western civilization which imagined the Balkans, especially in the context of religious disputes between Christians and Muslims during the middle ages up to the 19th century, as a potential site of Christian resistance against Islam. Furthermore, using Bakić-Hayden’s argument, she depicts a practice of nesting orientalism between the countries in the Balkan region, where she argues that this is very much apparent within the countries of the former Yugoslavia. (Todorova, 2009: 20) She hints at the possibility of a kind of orientalism being centered at religious practices, so it is easy to see how certain kinds of nation building processes at the

³ Term taken as introduced and outlined by Edward Said in his 1977 book “Orientalism”, this analytical tool “shows how a Western discourse on the Orient – ‘Orientalism’ – has constructed a ‘knowledge’ of the East and a body of ‘power–knowledge’ relations articulated in the interests of the ‘power’ of the West ... (and also it) show(s) that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self”. (Storey, 2009: 171)

end of the 20th century were revolving around religious practices of the population, the Croats being catholic Christians and the Serbs being Orthodox Christians. These discourses are being further enhanced by the Muslim other, rather a Muslim menace which has threatened Christians for centuries, opposed to which both the Serbian and the Croatian identity are also being consolidated. The focus of my work is on the Serbian-Croatian conflict so in that light Orthodox Christianity is being seen as legitimate but also as something that is kind of ambiguous, problematic and in a relative opposition to the Western imagination of Christianity, or rather something that is seen as the other within the Croatian context.

These insights are very important for the understanding dominant discourses in Croatia which were, at the times of the blossoming of the nationalistic discourses in the end of the 20th century, used western oriented Christianity as a key component of their national belonging of the Croatian people and imagining of the Serbs as the other, or the enemy. As a young boy in Croatia during early 1990s it was very often I heard people in the media, my seniors and educators use slogans such as God and Croats (*Bog i Hrvati*) and “Catholic Croatia as a bulwark of Western Christendom” which was historically opposed to the Orthodox East and (Ramet et. al. 2008: 299) and to the Ottoman Empire, but in the context of the 1990 it was more specifically aimed at Serbs. Furthermore such notions were especially present during the conflict between the Croats and Serbs in the 1990s. Since I was doing research within the Croatian context and I was only speaking with Croatian nationals I will throughout this paper refer to this conflict as the Homeland War (*Domovinski rat*) as this is how the Croats, in a sense of the state and popular discourses, dominantly characterize this conflict on the Croatian soil. Watching phenomenon through a balkanism lens warns that every context has its specificities and different discourses within it and around it, I wish to first present a

context in which the subjects of the paper were framed in. Since I have stated the research context, I will outline the specificities of it and the discourses which surround it.

In this chapter, I will give a brief historical overview of the recent Croatian history by explaining it through the dominant narratives of these periods. To this end I am using among others history books (Croatian and foreign), NGO produced literature, media depictions, and other sources. This will set up the context which will influence my methodological choices and research practices. This is shown in the final two subchapters.

1.1. From fighting to unite to fighting to disband: A Brief History of the relationship between the Croatian and Serbian communities in the 20th century Yugoslavia

In my thesis I am focusing on is Croatia during the 1990s up until today. In this period different discourses were forming within Croatia, and one of the most important, and in that sense a hegemonic one is the discourse of defending the nation from what is termed Greater Serbian Aggression (*Velikosrpska agresija*) by the Croatian state and most of its inhabitants who identified as Croatian. This is also supported by dominant discourses surrounding individual and institutional subjects who have taken up traditional discourses of gender roles in the newly forming nation-states, of men being those who defended the a nation and women being those who are defended (Cockburn, 2001: 19) especially in the beginning and during the war. It is very important to watch discursive regimes in different periods, and this will be discussed in further chapters, but the general idea is that there are certain subjective practices which are framed and limited by the discursive regimes in which the subjects is positioned.

I am concentrating on the Croatian context so the material I will be investigating will dominantly come from Croatian sources. First of all I wish to present a short list of key events, more precisely recurring themes which appear in, dominantly Croatian, mainstream media, political and NGO narratives but also in the narratives of the people I have interviewed. A lot of nationalistic discourse in Croatia is drawing upon the mythical places of the past, which are used to legitimize the nationalistic project, themes like: from the 7th century⁴ (*od stoljeća sedmog*), Croatian princes and kings (*kneževa i kraljeva*), the unification into the Kingdom of Hungary and so on. These are all historical places and symbols drawn for the nationalistic reawakening in the 19th century and in that sense have different meanings for different periods. Some Croatian historians like Ivo Banac would argue that the awareness of the national identity in Croatia and Serbia was formed and survived one way or another since medieval times (Banac, 1993: 23) although he does give a lot of importance to the rise of the 19th century nationalist ideologies in Europe. This kind of imagining of the nation could hold significance for viewing the period of the 1990s, because Banac's book was published in the 1984 in the USA, in a period of the beginning of high nationalistic tensions between the federal states of Croatia and Serbia. The fact that it was published in the USA also shows how certain nationalistic ideas were not allowed within the context of Yugoslavia and could be stated only in the liberal West. Furthermore this gives insight into how powerful were the myths of the Croat and Serbian pasts so powerful that some of the academic circles in the pre-war and war periods it was believed that the differences between Croats and Serbs were strongly embedded through history. This kind of academic knowledge production was used by another famous Croatian historian, the first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman.

⁴ A famous saying in Croatia which indicates that the Croats were on this land since the 7th century A.D. and is used for mainly nationalistic purposes

The ideas about the differences and historical embeddedness of Croatian and Serbian national identities became very important in the 20th century. In that sense a 20th century look at the dominant Croatian narrative is necessary. After the First World War, Croatia joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (*Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* - *Kraljevina SHS*) on the 1st of December 1918 and in historical narratives here this is the place where most of the problems started between Serbs and Croats. Croatian national narrative talks about an almost mythical Croatian politician Stjepan Radić and his famous “final warning” against the unification with Serbs on their terms. According to historical sources he called the act of the Croatian political elite who went to Belgrade to negotiate unification into the Kingdom of SHS⁵ reckless referring to the politicians who went “like drunken geese into a fog” (*kao pijane guske u maglu*) (Banac, 1993: 137) which was one of the pivotal moments of the Croatian historical narrations where the problems with the Serbs started. It is perceived as a moment where the Serbs duped the Croats into getting into the same state on the terms which were more favorable for the Serbs.

This new state was federal in nature with a Serbian monarch. Historical accounts of discrimination of Croats by Serbian officials within this state are present in the Croatian historical narrative (Banac 1993., Ivičević 2007.) and this kind of discourse was present in my elementary education in the 1990s especially in history classes. For instance when the old Austrian-Hungarian disbanded, Croatian military officers were assimilated into the new SHS army. In the Croatian narrative they were subordinated to and discriminated against by the Serbian officers (Banac, 1993: 150). With slight constitutional and name changes (it changed its name from Kingdom of SHS to Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929) and ethnically based

⁵ The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians or SHS. This was a union of Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. It was formed in 1918 after the breakup of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires.

opposition (in some cases terrorist organizations) within the state, the “First Yugoslavia” survived until the beginning of the Second World War when it was broken up. The territories during the war were divided into the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) which was a quisling state commanded by the Axis nations and leaned on the Nazi and Fascist discourses of race superiority finding their others with Serb, Roma and Jewish populations. The rest of the region was divided into German controlled Serbia and Italian controlled Montenegro. In this period a lot of violent events transpired like killings and land subtractions.⁶ These were later key tools for fueling nationalistic discourses in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s up to today. I have observed through media coverage of the Croatian parliament that representatives are still calling upon the allegiances of other representatives, their fathers and grandfathers within the NDH and Yugoslav regimes. The three most dominant significations are *Ustaša*,⁷ *Partizan*⁸ and *Četnik*.⁹

I have also observed this practice of naming people within narratives of my interviewees, which in turn were used to legitimize their acts and views towards people of different

⁶ The subtractions which happened during the NDH regime were justified ethnically by the regime (taken from Jews, Serbs and Roma people) but those which occurred during the SFRJ (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) were based in socialist ideology of spreading the wealth.

⁷ Meaning derived from an ethnic Croat person who acknowledged and acted in the NDH regime although small splinter groups existed during the First Yugoslavia. This meaning also shifted and was used dominantly during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s by ethnic Serbs to mark Croatians with ill intentions towards the Serbian people

⁸ Meaning derived from the socialist driven resistance movement which was present in all the Yugoslav countries during the Second World War, and to mark does who got ahead in life in the socialist Yugoslavia, today it is mostly used almost synonymously with the word Communist to mark the people on the left political specter or those who got ahead (by themselves or through family lineage) in the Yugoslav socialist regime.

⁹ Meaning derived from an ethnic Serbian soldier whose meaning originated from small splinter groups in the First Yugoslavia, and later on became the dominant Serbian armed force in the Second World War. The meaning shifted in the 1990s and was mostly used by Croat soldiers and politicians to mark the imagined occupying force which was mostly seen as being Serbian. Uses today are reserved for especially politically active Serbs in the Croatian parliament, for Croats who are championing the Serbian cause within the Croatian public discourses.

persuasions, such as politicians and human rights activists, and when explaining their violence towards Serbs.

This practice was produced mainly by upbringings within the SFRJ¹⁰, its ideological discourse which allowed ethnic identification, but did not tolerate nationalistic discourses of its citizens, and persecuted those who would talk about forming independent states. This was identified in my interviews as a common consensus and such state practices were very prevalent and efficient until the 1980s and Tito's death. Things in Yugoslavia did function on the principles of state socialism until the nationalist ideologies of member states erupted which is firstly very visible during the 1981 protests in Kosovo.

Here is the place where I would position the pre-war period. In Yugoslavia there were occasions where nationalistic movements and acts were practiced such as the Croatian Spring in 1971,¹¹ a mostly from Croatian member of the communist party and students and it was asking for bigger rights for Croatia within the SFRJ. It was ultimately shut down and the ringleaders spent time in jail or immigrated.¹²

These events did create symbols and heroes such as Franjo Tuđman (the first Croatian president after independence) who was the part of the political socialist political establishment but also criticized it during the Croatian Spring, Stjepan Mesić who supported the Croatian Spring (second president of Croatia after independence), Dražen Budiša (the first big opposition leader in Croatia who was more acceptable to the urban population of

¹⁰ Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia - existed since 1943. up until 1991., and was a socialist federal state run by a long term president Josip Broz Tito

¹¹ A nationalist movement in Croatia in the 1971. which was started by students and wanted more autonomy for the state Croatia within SFRYugoslavia

¹² Interpreted from the documentary series from „Croatian Spring“ produced by the Croatian Radio and Television (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J9LhaWImS0>, Last checked: 31st of May 2012.)

Croatia during the beginning of the 1990s but also drew heavily on the Croatian nationalistic discourses) and Ivan Zvonimir Čičak (today the president of Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights) both of whom were student leaders of the Croatian Spring and. All of them used the credentials of the Croatian Spring to politically prosper in the new Croatian state. Also there were observations within Croatia of some institutions, such as the army and police, were ethicized and were mostly run by Serbs. (Špegelj, 2001: 57-58) This observation was present in the narratives of my interviewees, especially those who today still strongly identify with the nationalistic discourses.

On the Croatian soil the first noticeable and violent nationalistic practices arose at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In June of 1991 the Croatian state declared independence from the SFRJ, which was an important factor for the violent breakup of Yugoslavia. Up until that moment, Serbs living in Croatia did feel threatened by this new rising nationalism in the late 80s and early 90s on the territory of Croatia, and did rebel against the Croatian state authorities. This revolt was most visible in the incidents which are today in Croatia most commonly known as the Balvan revolution¹³ named after the *balvans*¹⁴ which Serbs used to blockade the roads. They felt threatened for their status in Croatia due to the perceived wild nationalistic discourses and produced by the Croatian political elite and other important figures such as Franjo Tuđman and his newly formed HDZ.¹⁵ The newly formed state also proclaimed Catholicism as the state religion and Croatian as the official state language.

¹³ The first phase of the Serbian revolt on the Croatian territory. It started in November of 1990.

¹⁴ Literal meaning is “log” but in the context of revolution it refers to road blocks

¹⁵ The Croatian Democratic Union – a leading political right center political party during the 1990s, accredits itself for forming the Independent Croatian state

The Serb rebels in Croatia were very much stimulated and supported politically, financially and militarily by Belgrade and Milošević's regime. (Ramet, 2008: 199) This is also articulated in the Serbian state media by propaganda of the need to defend the Serbs in Croatia from the perceived *Ustaša* regime lead by Franjo Tuđman. (Čolović, 2002: 264) The Serbian rebels started rebelling in the Croatian state territory and started to call for the constitution of the Republic of Serbian Krajina. This was achieved during the war period 1991-1992 in Croatia which was waged between the Croatian army and the Serbian insurgents backed by JNA. The war in Croatia started officially in August 1991 when an armed aggression started from Serbia. Up until that point it was seen by the Croatian state as a rebellion started by the Serbs in Croatia.

Among Croats the rapid loss of so much territory (during the Serb insurgence), while the international community continued to dither about whether even to recognize Croatian independence, provoked a mixture of desperation, outrage, frustration, and determination to somehow prevail. For Croats, the war was understood as a war for the homeland (*Domovinski rat*), which is to say a defensive war. (Ramet, 2008: 201)

The pinnacle of this loss was the occupation of Vukovar in late 1991. Vukovar which was a ethnically mixed city. In 1991 large parts of the Serbian population were evacuated from Vukovar and the battle for Vukovar started. The fighting lasted for three months and in the end the Croats in the city surrendered. In the aftermath of the battle a lot of Croatian soldiers were executed and the Croatian civilians were driven out of the city. After that Vukovar became a symbol for the Croatian people of the Serbian aggression and brutality. It is worth noting that this loss was highly politicized and used in the war propaganda of the Croatian government. Vukovar was returned to the full jurisdiction of the Croatian state in 1998.

During the war a lot of people were displaced, especially on the basis of ethnicity. For instance on the national census in 1991 there were 581 663 self identified Serbs reported living in Croatia. By 2001 that had number dropped to 201 631.¹⁶ This number is not something that dominates the Croatian public discourse, but is in a sense an indicator of practices of ethnic cleansing. During the period of war a lot of Serbs were driven from, or felt threatened and, left their homes in Croatia.

Also it is important to mention that the number of war related casualties on the Croatian territory was approximately 24 000 people in which 15 000 were Croats and 6000-7000 were counted as Serbs. Also there are approximations of about a 3500 people still missing of which there are a 1000 Croats and 2500 Serbs.¹⁷

The war effectively ended in August 1995 when the military operation “Storm” (*Oluja*) was performed mainly on the territory surrounding the city of Knin. This operation was also very controversial because a lot of war crimes against Serbs civilians were committed, and in the 2000s this became a highly politicized topic. Later, at the end of 1995, the rest of the territory Croatia demanded was integrated to Croatia courtesy of the Dayton accord.¹⁸ The subsequent period of peace continued to run by the nationalist government of HDZ lead by Franjo Tuđman up until his death in 1999. In this post-Dayton period crimes against Serbs did not stop, looting and killing Serbs were not a wide spread practice, but cases were recorded by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. (Ramet, 2008: 160) This period did not bring

¹⁶ <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0038-982X/2008/0038-982X0802023B.pdf> (Last checked: 31st of May 2012.)

¹⁷ Date taken from: Kardov K., Lalić D. and Teršelić V. (2010) *Suočavanje s prošlošću u Hrvatskoj: Stavovi i mišljenja aktera i javnosti u poraću*. Zagreb: Documenta

¹⁸ A signed agreement between the former SFRJ states which ended the war and in most part resolved territorial disputes.

democratic change and a rule of human right discourse. A more left prone theorist and today left-center politician Vesna Pusić argues that the HDZ government was lead by “irrational, historic, national, 19th century” (Pusić, 1998: 23, my translation) interests and continued to ride the wave and legitimacy of the nationalistic ideology from the beginning of that decade.

The Croatian Catholic church, as the guardians of traditional values, did take a rather tactical position during the war and the post-war period. Officially it promoted peace, and more specifically peace between the Croats and Serb, but it also was gaining influence in the political arena, entering schools with obligatory Catholic religious education. (Ramet, 2008: 188) The cult of Tuđman’s personality which positioned him in the ranks and even above the historical personalities (Ramet, 2008: 165) such as Stjepan Radić, was also encouraged a situation where those loyal to him could to legally acquire positions, money, companies and state owned land. This practice, which was criticized by independent media, consequently lead a lot of people to become disillusioned with the HDZ government. This was also one of the main reasons why a new political party came into power in the early 2000s. They were a period of visible change in the dominant discourse; it did bring political pluralism and the consolidation of democracy into the Croatian political arena (Kekez, et. al. 2010: 10), but also it brought legitimacy to the NGO sector. Up until that point this sector existed with a few people founded by outside donors, but after that a lot of NGO organizations became partners with state institutions.

The 2000s are also important because of the strong acceptance of the Human Rights discourses¹⁹ by the Croatian state, visible in the changing legislation on violence against women, homosexuals and ethnic minorities. It is also the period when the indictments for war

¹⁹ Discourses used by the NGO’s, and which are mostly imported and sponsored by donors from the Western countries. In that sense they are also perceived as potentially foreign and threatening Croatian sovereignty by the nationalist groups in Croatia.

crimes against Croatian military personnel and politicians from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague were sent by the court to the Croatian government. Several Croatian generals who were active during the war were indicted and prosecuted. In Croatia this was a highly politicized affair and was mostly revolving around crimes committed in operation “Storm”, with the ruling parties trying to balance between nationalist and Human Rights discourses.

After giving the context, and discourses that were revolving mostly from Croatian sources, I will explain the methodology through which I will analyze the context and the specific research interest off my analysis

1.2. Doing qualitative research in a Foucauldian framework

In order to explain how discourses affect the subjects of my research I will use discourse analysis. In that sense what I wish to do is to focus on the narratives of the subjects I am exploring and pick out dominant discourses from those narratives and see how these discourses intersect and subjectify them. I am complementing this method by keeping ethnographical notes of the events I encounter on the field, which are helping me contextualize Croatia and in picking out the dominant discourses, primarily in the narratives of male soldiers and peace activists. As Morley argues

...qualitative research strategies such as ethnography are principally designed to gain access to “naturalized domains” and their characteristic activities (Morley, 1992: 186, in Barker and Galasiński, 2001: 18)

This view on doing ethnography is also supported by Ingold who states that “The objective of ethnography is to describe the lives of people other than ourselves, with an accuracy and

sensitivity honed by detailed observation and prolonged firsthand experience.” (2008: 69)

Going on from that point my ethnographic notes are an analytical tool which will give context to the interviews I am doing, and how do the individual narratives resonate with the Croatian society as a whole.

Through the analysis of language in interviews which is framed by contextual discourses I want to gain access to the principle discourses which guide the practices of the interviewees in my research. The concept of discourse here is taken up from Foucault and means that discourse is an “organized and organizing ... (body) of knowledge, with rules and regulations which govern particular practices (ways of thinking and acting).” (Storey, 2009: 128)

This means that in the context of doing interviews with subjects and dealing with what to certain thing in their narratives mean I see that

...meaning does not proliferate in an endless deferral but is regulated by power which governs not only what can be said under determinate social and cultural conditions but who can speak, when and where ... To speak is to take up a subject position and to be subjected to the regulatory power of that discourse. (Barker and Galasiński, 2001: 12-13)

This approach to research also has a specific view on agency and understands it as a

...socially constructed capacity to act and is not to be confused with a self-originating transcendental subject. We are not made up of an inner core self which possesses attitudes, beliefs, and the capacity to act. We are a network of attitudes, beliefs etc. which does act. (Barker and Galasiński, 2001: 17)

To view agency like this is symptomatic of the process of subjectification in which “practices which subordinate people shape the consciousness of and possibilities for the self’s identity”. (Cerwonka, 2011: 65) In other words

Identities are discursive-performative (Butler, 1993, 1994) in the sense that they are best described as constructed through discursive practice which enacts or produces that which it names through citation and reiteration of norms or conventions. (Barker and Galasiński, 2001: 28)

This kind of approach has a basis in the works of authors such as Wittgenstein and Derrida who would claim “that the ‘real’ is always already a representation.” (ibid. 18) In this thesis I am doing a discourse analysis of the interviews and the material I have ethnographically collected with the focus on the discursive elements which support the biopolitical framework presented by Michael Foucault (1997.) which I will use to explain the Croatian context.

Building upon these methodological presumptions the next few chapters will outline my theoretical framework, and use material from my research in order to frame certain parts of the theories I am applying. The subjects I interviewed are those whose practices mostly plot the dominant discourse of nationalism within the context of a violent conflict as they are primarily soldiers who were fighting on the front lines but also peace activists who to a large extent resisted nationalism discourses.

Based on the presumptions of memory as a social construct and the problems of trauma I am building upon work done by Edna Lomsky-Feder. She is dealing directly with the population of my interest but in the context of 1973 Yom Kippur War. She deduces from her research that

The personal memory of war is not homogenous but, rather, multicolored: Some remember the war as a traumatic experience and others as a heroic event: some recall it as an experience that obstructs personal development, and others as an empowering and fortifying one. War veterans, even from the same social group, remember the war in different ways, but all reminiscence is shaped within a memory field that is socially constructed. (Lomsky-Feder, 2004:82)

Through the investigation of soldiers' narratives I will explore why these different subjective imaginings of identity are occurring, or rather how their fluidity is produced and how the current discourses affect the memories of the violent conflict. Memories "can only be understood in relation to the power relations that produce them ... (such as) the complex set of relations (economic, cultural, gendered and so forth) that shape a given experience." (Cerwonka, 2011: 70)

The fluidity of identity and the discourses which plot it is a one of the key interests of my research. In that sense I have already positioned this work within the violent conflict periods in which different kind of discourses subjectify different kinds of subjects differently. This follows Cynthia Cockburn who, writhing among other things about the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, detects four distinct periods in national conflicts; pre-war, war, peacemaking and post-war. (Cockburn, 2001.) In line with the detection of discourses I will analyze these discourses from a temporal distance. Through my interviews I am only able to analyze narratives which are created at the present time which is the post-war period. In that sense giving context in the previous chapter is important in order to trace the genealogy of certain discourses which are prevalent today and which can be read out of the interviewee's narrative. I can only partially read out what certain discourses meant in certain periods, and

through interviews and ethnographic notes what they mean today and how they influence subjective practices.

Miličević would argue

There have been two dominant ways of understanding the “ethnic” nature of the wars that followed upon the break-up of Yugoslavia. The first approach focuses on “ancient ethnic hatreds” and the pre-modern nature of the Balkans as the cause of the violence. This line of argument has dominated journalistic coverage and much of the political discourse. The other dominant explanation holds that the wars were caused by political elites and intellectuals—ethnic entrepreneurs—who mobilized the population by using relentless nationalist propaganda in the mass media ... However, neither approach accounts for the actions of “ordinary people” in a satisfactory manner—the first one, assumes that their actions are determined by their ethnicity; the second one absolves them of responsibility for their actions and fails to account for the ways in which ordinary men (and women) interpret the messages that are created by the elites. (Miličević, 2006: 267)

This is partly what I wish to do with my work. I want to see interpret how do the narrations of “ordinary” people correspond with the dominant discourses produced in Croatia and how they subjectify them and direct them towards certain practices.

1.3. The problems of doing research with ex-soldiers

Lastly I wish to explain the practical parts of my research methods. Following from the context and my research interest, I interviewed 17 people who today live in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. This is also a limitation because I do not get insights into discourse of the

whole country, but only of a large continental urban context. I split my 17 interviewees into 3 groups;

1. men who were soldier in the war and self identify as *branitelji* (defenders)²⁰ in the present Croatian context
2. men who were soldiers in the war but do not identify as such in the present Croatian context
3. men who were peace activists during the war

I wish to stress that these were the people who acted most intensively on the discourses of nationalism, and they are in a minority of the Croatian population. During the period of war there were a large number of men who did not want to go to war, evaded it, and continued living everyday lives, and this is especially apparent in Zagreb which was never on the front line of the war.

I decided to keep their identities anonymous, due to the sensitivity of this topic, I therefore named the first group Defenders 1-6, members of the second group Soldiers 1-6 and the members of the last group Peace activists 1-5. Getting to interview the populations of Defenders proved quite difficult. I approached a few veteran organizations as a social scientist in order to interview their members; they did not answer my calls and emails. By using personal contacts I was able to get involved as an interviewer in a project which revolved around collecting veteran memories about the war. This was a good, safe position for me but also a slightly limiting, because I could only get their stories about the war. Technically by using additional questions I was able to have an interview which resembled

²⁰ Deduced from the discourse of defending the nation from Serbian aggression, they call themselves *branitelji* (defenders) and are perceived as such in the Croatian society. The word *branitelji* is derived from the word *braniti* – to defend.

my other interviews. The other groups were much easier to locate and talk to, especially due to my connections in the peace activist movements. Most of these respondents were glad to have a talked with me, due to my insider status in the NGO scene. This was the problem with the defenders because they were not very reluctant to talk to outsiders due to the fear of what they might reveal. This could be possible crimes and killings which occurred during their stationing at a certain location. In any event crimes were not disclosed to me by my interviewees.

The aim of my interview and interview questions was to identify what the interviewees determined were the contexts in which they could act. This was mostly read out from their narrated motivations for going or not going into the war and their narratives of primary and secondary socialization. I also kept ethnographic notes which concerned the people I was interviewing, as well as notes about the current context of Croatia, read out of the media depictions (TV, newspapers), and from various peace activist and defender gatherings and events within the city of Zagreb. These notes were used to complement these narratives.

The primary research was conducted from January 2012 to April, 2012. Before this period and in order to prepare for my research and to get better acquainted with the context I was researching, I did an internship in the CMS in Zagreb, Croatia. CMS or Center for Peace Studies (*Centar za Mirovne Studije*) is an NGO which is involved in peace building practices, often works with minority groups in Croatia, and sometimes with war time victims and veterans. This internship lasted from April to August. 2011. During my stay there I conducted preliminary interviews with the people from NGO-s that were involved in peace activism during the war. I also used their connections to get in touch with other interviewees, namely peace activists during the war and war veterans. Through this internship I also got a feel for the NGO discourses which are today becoming a significant part of the main stream

discourses. Through the periods of the 1990s up until today these discourses have conflicted with the nationalism discourses established in the 1990s.

In both cases I conducted semi-structured interviews which started with more open-ended questions about the subjects' youth, growing up, pre-war, war and post-war periods. Towards the end of the interviews I asked more specific questions in relation to the EU, the trials of the Croatian generals, and the interviewees' stances on Serbs. I recorded the interviews also took notes during the interviews, following the advice of Baker and Galasiński:

It is better to use a tape recorder to document the utterances of research subjects rather than invent their speech because (a) we will be better able to translate and understand the words of others for practical purposes and (b) we will be better able to predict the actions of others. (2001: 19)

One potential problem was the translation of Croatian into English. Some authors such as Davidson claim that “there can be no such thing as an untranslatable language, for under such circumstances we would be unable to recognize others as language users in the first place.” (Davidson, 1984 in Barker and Galasiński, 2001: 20) The good thing is that I am a native of Croatia and in that sense I can understand the potential discursive implications which are harder for foreigners to spot due to the lack of understanding of multiple meaning, and contextual changes of meaning of certain words. The down side of my position is that I am embedded in the Croatian culture and it is much easier for me to not detect certain discursive formations due to the fact that they are so embedded in the culture that they seem to me to be natural. This was evident when I was preparing to go and to field work, totally invested in the idea that Croatia was unquestionably defending itself from Serbian aggression. This fact was brought to my attention by my supervisor and we discussed it. By using discourse analysis I

was able to bridge my embeddedness by placing such perceived fact in a position of a dominant discourse in the Croatian context.

The importance of starting early with the explanation of methodology of the thesis is based in the need to use the material collected to back up the theoretical gaps and assumptions which this paper will explore. The methodology is closely linked with the theory of biopolitics, which draws on discourses, and to a need to gender this theory. That is why this chapter presented the context and methodological framework through in which I will explore the validity of my thesis.

2. Theorizing Masculinity within a Biopolitical Context

Building on the context, and by adding to it by presenting recollections and, feminist conceptualizations of the period, in this chapter I am presenting the conceptualization of the nationalist discourse and its intersection with gender. These insights will then be incorporated in to the biopolitical theory upgrading its perspective to show how the biopolitical system regulates gendered subject within modern liberal societies.

A great body of literature was presented on the war time, deaths and victims in the Croatian Homeland war. The main theme was the problematization of equating the nation with a woman, or rather with a mother, as was a common theme in the feminist literature done by feminists in the ex-Yugoslav states. (Kašić, 2001, Kesić, 2001, Žarkov, 2007) This work detected two patterns: the first one viewed that homeland as symbolically marked as

feminine, for instance “mother Croatia” which needed to be defended. The other meaning was concerned with objectification of Croatian mothers weeping for their sons or a bride waiting for her partner to return from the war, and the mobilization of such images in the nationalistic cause.

These analysis go in the tradition set up by Nira Yuval-Davis who is a pioneer in the theory which connects gender and nation focusing on their role as biological reproducers of the nation, reproducer of ethnic boundaries, participants in ideological reproduction, signifiers of national difference and participants in violent national struggles. (Antias and Yuval-Davis, 1989: 7) What is particularly missing is a masculine perspective, or rather not so much that men are left out of the analyses but they are looked at in a monolithic view of always being the perpetrator of violent crimes which reproduce certain types of masculinities that subjugate women. I am not searching for ways to redeem such masculine practices but rather to find an explanatory mechanism which shows how these practices are discursively embedded in societies, and how they work with the biopolitical process in order to maintain a certain type of imagined society in the modern liberal context. In further chapters I will more specifically how these systems apply to the soldiers’ sense of masculinity and how this is regulated in modern societies.

Some authors have argued to use a focus on gender as a central category (Hunt, Rygiel, 2006: 4) through which one is best able to see how through reproduction of certain gender stereotypes it is easy to legitimize certain types of violent practices in the context of nationalistic discourses. In this thesis the focus will be on analyzing discourse surrounding Croatian masculinity in an urban setting, which be viewed through a biopolitical lens and in that sense I will explain their function and intersection with other discourses within the context of Croatia.

2.1. Imagined/discursive communities

Analyzing and theorizing nationalism has brought upon a great deal of scholarly work to the table at the end of the 20th century. It has caught a great number of authors' imagination, those working in the fields of sociology, anthropology, history and gender studies. The problem was always how to define this phenomenon. Its origins can be traced to the French revolution at the end of the 18th century, and a phenomenon which became very visible in the 19th century when the “awakenings of nations” began.

Authors like Anthony D. Smith, Ernst Gellner, Eric J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson are the most prominent in theorizing this phenomenon in a way at viewing at it from the perspective of its formation in the 19th century. In their own ways they attempted to deconstruct nationalism, and among these authors I detect two distinct lines of argumentations on the topic of how to analyze the nationalistic practices of the subjects involved in them. The first line of argumentation is the one presented by Smith, Gellner, and Hobsbawm who would argue that nationalism originates from the sense of a false reading of history on the part of the people who are invested in nationalistic practices. They argue that the past is perceived by the ideologically driven false reading of myths of the glorious heroes, symbols and historical generational flow of ethnic ancestors through the ethnic lands of certain peoples. This is viewed as ideological basis for political elites to manipulate such subjects. (Gellner, 1997., Hobsbawm, 1992., Smith, 1991.)

The other perspective from Benedict Anderson is a little more open to a kind of Foucauldian perspective of discursive fields of knowledge. Anderson is more prone to observe nationalist practices through a lens of anthropology and according to that perspective he defines nations. “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an

imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” (Anderson, 2006: 5-6) In this definition he brilliantly intersects four phenomena which are extremely efficient for incorporating its presumptions into the biopolitical framework of Foucault. First he defines a nation as an *imagined* community which indicates that nations are not false or true, but that there is a contextual difference in which they were imagined.

In including the qualification *limited*, Anderson hints at the possibility of othering of other nations, by saying that however big the nation might be it still needs other nations in order to distinguish itself.

The third part of the definition is that the nation is *sovereign*, through which he signals that nationalism when viewed in a temporal context presented a discourse that gave subjects the possibility to break free from the power of a single sovereign and enter into a democratic sovereign state with all its specificities, which is in line with the Foucauldian notions of the transition from disciplinary to regulatory power in the 19th century.

The final part of the definition refers to *community* and since I am focusing on the soldiers who went to their potential deaths in my thesis I am using Michaela Schäuble’s interpretation of Anderson.

Finally Anderson focuses on *community* which shows a strong embeddedness in the nationalistic discourse, a strong feeling of a kind of kinship with other imagined members of the community and in fact a readiness to die for such a community. Interrogating the powerful influence of “imagined communities” on individuals, Benedict Anderson points out that nationalism potentially has the capacity to offer citizens a means of converting their own deaths into a shared immortality (Anderson 1983). (Schäuble, 2009: 171)

Anderson's notion of imagination gives a very productive theoretical frame in which to question nationalistic discourses within a modern nation-state context. The practice of imagining is in that sense a discursive practice which produces and reproduces certain nationalistic discourses in a given context. This also connects to gender practices, especially when viewed in the framework of strong nationalistic fluctuations within communities that is apparent also within the Yugoslav pre-war context. This period shows that the basis for certain types of discourses do not come about arbitrarily but are rooted in societies, such as in the example of Croatian national identity. Andrew Gilbert talks about these identities being established through the Yugoslav secret police UDBA (*Uprava državne sigurnosti*) through ethnic difference of their collaborators. Records of four different categories of collaborators were kept in four separate books: the green one for Muslims, the red one for Serbs, and two blue ones, one for Croats. (Gilbert, 2006: 14) This rootedness of such discourses is also shown in the example of the Croat soldier during the war. In it he narrates his national illumination during a community building protest.

Then thought to myself; I am a Croat for goodness sakes, but I did not feel it was on the account of somebody else. Just do not touch me and mine... (talking about motives that drew him to the Croatian Spring) (Soldier 3)

This also shows the limitations of the imagining practice within a given context and since it is narrated in 2012 a awareness has arisen of not to go into chauvinistic discourses but still "other" the other is clearly stated by him saying "somebody else" and "me" and "mine". Another former soldier shows a much more complex and deliberate imagining of his Croatianism through the differentiation of names. In this example he also uses tactics with which he hopes not to be exposed to the societal stigmatization as a radical nationalist in the contemporary context.

I was watching who was in power (in the ex-Yugoslavia) the names of people, I was not a chauvinist, but I was a nationally conscious person (Defender 2)

Usually to consolidate its limited community chauvinistic nationalist discourses need an “other”, and his specific practice of imagining which also search for the other within a given context. This is thoroughly obvious when there is talk about two overlapping discourses such as the Serbian and the Croatian ones. Both of them had elements of purity within them, purity based on the exclusion of the other.

To some extent, nationalism may be understood as an instinctive response to nationalist-motivated violence, with the result that ethnic war provokes a spiraling tumescence of chauvinistic nationalism, with this nationalism feeding on the nationalism of the opposite side as well as in itself. (Ramet, 2008: 158-159)

Literature suggests that dominant pre-war discourse and more specifically those perceived by the defenders were similar and; the defenders saw the Yugoslav state institutions as ethnically marked (Špegelj, 2001: 57-58), the saw the inevitability of a conflict due to the other side's (the Serbs) ideological and practical investment into violent confrontation (Žunec, 2007: 66-69) and in the end they perceived their masculinity and honor being in question if they did not take up arms honorably to defend Croatia and in doing so killing the Serbian enemy. This was the case with Croatia in the 1990s, as the dominant discourse presented a need to bring all the Croats, including those in Vojvodina and Bosnia and Herzegovina, into the Croatian nation, and the Serbs who lived in Croatia were seen as a foreign body. (Ramet, 2008: 162)

One of the key distinctions between a citizens' state and a national state is that, while the former focuses its energy on bringing all of its citizens into active participation in the life of the community and emphasizes the protection of all citizens, regardless of

ethnicity, a national state focuses its energy on bringing all of its nationals into the life of the community and emphasizes the protection of all nationals. (Ramet, 2008: 162)

To summarize, Anderson's concept of imagining is very productive when exposing nationalism as a discourse and a very powerful and naturalized within today's context of modern nation states. The next section will provide the possibility of gendering such a discourse showing how gender intersects with nationalism during national struggle and its reproduction of gender normative practices.

2.2. Engendering the practices of imagining

After connecting the process of imaging to a Foucauldian framework the second part of this chapter will analyze the connection between masculinity and nationalism, and how this connection produces certain practices which can be viewed as process of a re-traditionalization of a society. I take inspiration from Derrida's view on gender anti-essentialist research practices. As summarized by Baker and Galasiński:

This antiessentialist stance argues that femininity and masculinity are not essential universal and eternal categories but plastic, malleable, cultural constructions. This enables the production of a range of possible masculinities and femininities. (2001: 10-11)

In that respect in order to analyze masculinity, to relate it to honor and seeing how it is framed and transformed within the war and post war period I will am taking up the theoretical framework from R.W. Connell who strives to put subjects in ideal typical power positions. According to Connell there can be detected three ideal types of masculine identity practices;

hegemonic,²¹ subordinated,²² complicit²³ and marginalized.²⁴ (2005: 76-81) This kind of framework suggests that not all types of identity practices are in the same position in certain cultures and certain times. But also it suggests that not all practices (if any) completely overlap with these ideal types, but they strive towards these ideal typical discourses and in a sense get benefits from this striving and identifying in a form of social acceptance and privilege in relation to feminine practices.

It is also important to state that “Hegemonic masculinity is always in a tense – and potentially unstable – relationship with other masculinities, whether defined in terms of sexuality, class, age or race.” (Tosh, 2004: 43) This is also a useful analytical tool for looking at different spatial and temporal contexts. John Tosh goes even further in his interpretation of Gramsci’s use of hegemony, putting it as something which is not only attributed to the processes of domination through force and legal power but as a relation which becomes embedded in culture and henceforth normative. (ibid. 43) For gender relations this means that “hegemony denotes both unequal social relations which empower certain groups of men, and the model of masculinity – often unconscious – which legitimates those relations, convincing the generality of men that there is no other way ‘being a man’” (ibid. 44). Further, continuing from that notion, Tosh identifies mass media in modern societies as one of the main reinforcers of dominant expressions of masculinity. He uses this line of argumentation to

²¹ “Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practices which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women.” (Connell, 2005: 77)

²² Mostly means masculinities build around homosexual practices and in that sense is subordinated to hegemonic masculinities on the basis of political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse, legal abuse etc. (ibid. 78)

²³ Points to the practices which are not hegemonic per se but strive towards the hegemonic position and do get the male hegemonic opposed to the female practices within a given society. (ibid. 79)

²⁴ Masculine practices which are viewed through categories of race and class and subordinated on those merits. (ibid. 80-81)

question the notion of patriarchy presented by 1970s and 1980s feminist second wave theoretical perspectives. In his interpretation the problem with their use of patriarchy as a descriptive tool of societal inequality is that it demonizes men as the constant oppressors and women as the subjects of that oppression. (ibid. 45) Not all men have these attributes but many men wish to attain those standards, such is the measure of the hegemonic status of these hegemonic practices. (ibid. 47)

Another usage “identifies hegemonic masculinity as the masculine norms and practices which are most valued by the politically dominant class and which help to maintain its authority.” (ibid. 48) It is useful to keep these categories distinct, Tosh argues:

In periods of emerging national identity or of national resistance, this dominant masculinity is likely to become a metaphor for the political community as a whole and to be expressed in highly idealized forms ...This identification of hegemonic masculinity with the dominant class has important implications for the armed services. In order for the state to have secure control of the means of violence, there must be a reliable stream of recruits into the armed forces with the appropriate values and capacities; and there must be a broad popular acceptance of the military as being necessary and even laudable. Both these considerations tend towards a convergence between military and civilian codes of masculinity. (ibid.49)

The three populations of interviewees I am analyzing show subjective and hierarchical shifts, and also the benefits of striving towards practicing certain masculinities.

In the context of this thesis it is important to note that existing studies about Croatian masculinity were rarely conducted in a systematic manner. By this I mean that there was never shown a clear discursive transformative context. One way I am going about my

analysis is by using authors who are doing comparative research on masculinity in the context of the Croatian - Serbian conflict. Authors such as Dubravka Žarkov argue that there were different discourses surrounding Croatian and Serbian soldiers, their identity representations, and especially, as part of these representations their masculinities. (2011., 2007., 2001.) This point is also important in the sense of different genealogies of honor and masculinity of the two opposing factions (which were using each other for “othering”). A crude observation about different masculinity models emerging from Serbian and Croatian masculinity discourses can be made; the discourses of Croatian warrior masculinity as being more westernized while the Serbian one being more orientalized, at least that is a discourse that dominates the discourses within the Croatian context.

By approaching the Croatian context in this way I will also show the importance of the signification of the “other” in the practices of identifying with certain identity models (Peterson, 1999: 37), which will in turn give me an insight into the specific workings of racism towards other ethnic groups. This is also based on research done by authors such as Wendy Bracewell that argues that masculinity in Serbia before the war was constructed by the need of opposition to the aggressive “other” (Bracewell, 2000.) and this in the context of Croatia was the Croat. On the other hand authors Michaela Schäuble like did more in-depth research on the topic of Croatian warrior masculinity but in a rural context. In that respect Schäuble (2009.) sees a difference between the rural and urban discourses surrounding masculinity and their deployment within Croatian context, and my choice of the urban population will complement the insights from Schäuble. What I will show in the last chapter of this thesis is that dominant masculinities discourses, and show how they are in conflict within the periods of pre-war, war, and post-war. Also it is important to notice that the visibility of certain elements of subjectivity, such as discourses about masculinity and

ethnicity, are more visible in certain temporal contexts. For instance in times of ethnic conflict masculine identifications are the ones which are mostly connected to the hegemonic discourses which surround ethnic belonging.

Up until this point I have hinted that the relationship between hegemonic masculine and nationalistic practices is not coincidental but rather complementary especially in times of violent conflict. This is a period when “usual” social practices are to a large degree suspended and the military, as a traditionally masculine institution which in most instances produces a very normative and a bit more aggressive type of masculinity, steps in as dominant influence on practices from which identities are derived. Going on from this, dominant nationalistic discourses go hand in hand together with the war period’s hegemonic masculinity type which is in most cases warrior masculinity. This is something that authors like Nagel argue very directly when they say that “it is therefore no surprise that the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism”. (1998: 248-249) The most visible components of such practices are “Physical strength and practical competence ..., as Connell himself emphasized in his original formulation: other recurrent features include sexual performance and the capacity to protect and support women.” (Tosh, 2004: 47)

These types of masculinity practices are complementary with the expansive “state-led” and “state-seeking” types of nationalist discourses (Peterson, 1999: 34-35). This is especially evident in the “state-seeking” discourse which spurs aggressive practices because it needs able and aggressive bodies in order to confirm or obtain territory to which it pretends to. Again when discussing “state-led” and “state-seeking” discourses it is clear that they are ideal types and means to discuss certain discursive regimes and practices which occurred in them.

It is important to see this connection of masculinity and nationalism as a nexus through which a lot of important structural practices are implicated, such as violent conflict with the forces of another nation, the rule of right wing parties who use nationalism to gain legitimacy, inscribing in law very “traditional” values such as no abortion regulation, mandatory conscription of able bodies for the war effort, establishing a state sponsored religion, etc. The next section will theorize the biopolitical system which is very much complemented by nationalistic discourses and which reproduces them and regulates them.

2.3. Reproducing masculinity through the biopolitical regime

Having establishing that there exist a strong connection between nationalist and masculine discourses especially in time of ethnic conflict I will now explain how this can be productively viewed through a biopolitical lens. The importance of biopolitics in my thesis is to show how these discourses are in the function of larger power relation, namely biopower. But in order to do that I will first shortly examine Foucault’s explanation of the concept biopower and biopolitics. I will explore how Foucault traced the genealogy of biopower and by bringing in some new analytical categories such as hegemony, making do, strategies and tactics I will look for a better analytical understanding of the biopolitical discursive regime presented by Foucault.

Before arguing for biopower, Foucault firstly looks at the discourses of “racism” in order to later explain how biopower functions. He state that “we should reserve the expression ‘racism’ or ‘racist discourse’ for something that was basically no more than a particular and localized episode in the great discourse of race war or race struggle”. (Foucault, 1997: 65) When he talks about race war or race struggle he differentiates the two possible opposing sides as races which “exist when there are two groups which, although coexist, have not

become mixed because of the differences, dissymmetries, and barriers created by privileges, customs and rights, distribution of wealth, or the way in which power is exercised” (ibid. 77). He also says that it is an old and constant discourse, but when he says racism it is a reworked term which has its roots in the 19th century counter discourses of Enlightenment and science. It is important to say that the discourses and counter discourses are not binary oppositions but that they are different kinds of dominant discourses which are partially oppositional and through their intersection a new discursive regime is produced in the 19th century. To understand biopower within the new discursive regime the term “power” in a Foucauldian sense has to be explained.

Foucault describes that in the feudal regime power worked dominantly in a disciplinary form. In that sense it “binds and immobilizes, and is both the founder and guarantor of order” (ibid. 68). This power regime was mostly enhanced by the discourses of sovereignty and history which gave legitimacy to the sovereign who dominantly used power in a disciplinary manner and this allowed the sovereign to have power to kill his subjects. This kind of a discursive regime started to drastically change in the 19th century and another kind of power regime emerged. Its basis was the result of an intersection between the dominant historical discourse which was the basis of the sovereign’s position and a historical counter discourse a basis of the people who resisted this discursive regime. This newly produced discourse

transformed race struggle into class struggle – at the time when this conversion was going on, it was in fact only natural that attempts should be made by one side to recode the old counterhistory not in terms of class, but in terms of races – races in the biological and medical sense of that term (ibid. 80)

This was due to the importance of the race war discourse in the given societal context. Foucault argues that it was a “tactical” use of the revolutionary discourse of racism to counter the old sovereign beliefs. This term “tactical” is interesting because it can be imagined differently than in Foucault’s theoretical frame; in the sense that M. de Certeau uses it, and by doing so a better understanding of the production of the new discursive regime can be achieved.

De Certeau argues for a position where subjects live in a “making do” context (Certeau, 1984: 29-30) where they engage in tactical actions in order to incorporate new meanings within the given first level system. The first level can be described as a context, which is in the biopolitical sense a given Western society with a few basic elements such as race and borders. From this presumption the racism discourse is seen as revolutionary, as opposed to the monarchical discursive regime of the Medieval and the start of the Enlightenment era. But they both have a basis in racial differences which are in different periods being differently described, but are in essence being traced to a discourse which Foucault describes as race wars.

De Certeau, described a tactic as a “calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus” (ibid. 37) and argues that in that sense by repeating and gaining visibility it can become a strategy (“calculation of power relationship that becomes possible as soon as the subject with will and power can be isolated” (ibid. 35-36)). This applied to Foucault meant that people firstly used racist discursive practices, derived from the racist discourse, tactically and through repetition they became more and more strategic.

The new discursive regime was also needed in order to make sense of, discipline and regulate the booming population and aggressive industrialization. It attempted to deal with people as a

species, which meant a move from an old focus on the individual. This is called the biopolitical discursive regime and is prevalent in modern liberal societies and for which Foucault argues that it

...is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers... [it is] a technology in which bodies are replaced by general biological processes (Foucault, 1997: 249).

In this new discursive regime the regulatory power becomes the main model of social operations, and it to a large extent replaces bodies with a biological process which is generalized throughout the society. It regulates whole populations, and how they are defined as human beings. On the other side subjects of the society participate in that process because it also gives them a plausible and “natural” explanation of the world around them. It is also different from the situation where individuals were disciplined by the institutions; now in those mechanisms are complimented with a state which bioregulates populations. (ibid. 250)

In this discursive regime medicine is a prime discourse which has the capability to discipline and regulate individuals and populations. These two modes of power are intersected and can be described as biopower.

Here the importance of racism comes into play because the state uses it on two general levels; on the level of racial differentiation to other states, and on another level on finding degenerates which deviate from the norm within the singular society. The state has the justification to “kill them off” (killing can mean a literal murder and a symbolic isolation from the society) and in that sense it regulates what life is and who belongs to the population. All of the above mentioned argumentation leads me to thoughts on hegemony and hegemonic

discourse because of the idea of the first level system presented by de Certeau. Authors like Storey describe this Gramscian notion as

...a specific kind of consensus: a social group seeks to present its own particular interests as the general interests of the society as a whole. In this sense, the concept is used to suggest a society in which, despite oppression and exploitation, there is a high degree of consensus, a large measure of social stability; a society in which subordinate groups and classes appear to actively support and subscribe to values, ideals, objectives, cultural and political meanings, which bind them to, and ‘incorporate’ them into, the prevailing structures of power. (Storey, 2009: 80)

Hegemony, as I want to use it, does not signal a false consciousness among the people who are caught up in such a relational context. I only wish to stress that some discourses are truly hegemonic in a sense that most people in a given society would accept them as something that they feel as the first level system, presented by de Certeau, in Foucauldian terms a dominant discourse or more specifically in terms they are similar to Andersons community which is imagined as that first level system. In turn they see it as something so embedded in our societal reality that it seems completely normal, unquestionable or just how the world is, a context in which they have to strategically or tactically act and that something is the context of the nation state. This is what I wish to connect to Foucault’s description of racism discourse which is derived from the discourse of race wars. I see the term race wars and racism fitting this hegemonic notion because it is in a sense always accompanying, in one form or another, discursive changes within Western society in the periods Foucault is describing; from at least Medieval times up to today. This is especially obvious when Foucault argues that “it should in fact be immediately obvious that it [race wars] is a discourse that has great ability to circulate, a great aptitude for metamorphosis, or a sort of

strategic polyvalence.” (Foucault, 1997: 76) The same can be said of nationalist discourses, or rather we can see them forming and coming into a dominant position at the same time that the biopolitical state system came into being.

If racism is one of the key elements in nationalistic practices of othering on the basis of ethnicity, and a similar pattern is also seen in the rise of nationalist discourses within the ex-Yugoslavia especially during the pre-war and war periods, when the sovereign rule legitimized through Tito did not have the same effect anymore. The narratives of my interviewees confirm this weakening of the Yugoslav state sovereign power by arguing that it did not have the same effect and eventually lead to unrest.

The 80s were in some way prolonged dying, that happens to an autocratic regime in which such an important oligarch (Tito) dies. (Peace activist 5)

When the death of Tito came I was personally convinced that it would come to unrest in the whole area of Yugoslavia... (Defender 1)

In the 1980s Yugoslavia witnessed the rise of nationalism (based on ethnic difference) as the dominant discourse.

But how does this tie into specific gender and nationalism production, especially in times of violent conflict? I outline the argument made by Wendy Brown who argues that state power is not gender neutral (Brown, 1992: 9) and that in a Foucaulian sense power that regulates and disciplines the population is also reproduces and is reproduced by gender difference or rather the power that I am talking about is masculinist power, which is not unambiguous in nature but is complex and works on many different levels (Brown, 1992: 14) and favors masculine practices. She gives an example of this complexity:

Concretely, if men do not maintain some control over relations of reproduction, they cannot as easily control women's labor and if they do not monopolize the norms and discourse of political life, they exercise much less effective sexual and economic control over women. (Brown, 1992: 16)

Brown identifies four main dimensions of such power relations which specifically involve gender. She mentions the *juridical-legislative*,²⁵ *the capitalist*,²⁶ *the prerogative*²⁷ and *the bureaucratic*²⁸ dimension of power relations. Connecting to my topic, I am focusing on the prerogative dimension of power. This kind of power relation produces and reproduces a situation where

women have been culturally constructed and positioned as the creatures to whom this pursuit of power and glory for its own sake stand in contrast: women preserve life while men risk it; women tend the mundane and the necessary while men and the state pursue larger-than-life concerns; men seek immortality while women look after mortal affairs: men discount or with their activities threaten the realm of everyday life while women nurture and protect it." (Brown, 1992: 25)

²⁵ "the liberal state not only adjudicates for subjects whose primary activities transpire in civil society rather than the family, but it does so in a discourse featuring and buttressing the interests of individualistic men against the *mandatory* relational situation of women situated in sequestered domains of caretaking." (Brown, 1992: 20)

²⁶ "In this division (dimension), men do paid "productive" work and keep women in exchange for women' unpaid work of reproducing the male laborers (housework) and the species (childcare) and caring for the elderly or infirm." (Brown, 1992: 20)

²⁷ Refers to the possibility of legal violence of the state and Brown explains it like this "the violence of the "state of nature" is not overcome but recognized and resituated in, on the one hand, the state itself as the police and military, and, on the other, the zone marked "private" where the state may not tread and where a good deal of women's subordination and violation transpires." (Brown, 1992: 23)

²⁸ This dimension presents bureaucracy as discipline which "is both an *end* and an *instrument*, and thereby operates *as power* well as well as *in the service of other powers* all the while presenting itself as extrinsic to or natural with regard to power, making it especially potent in shaping the lives of women who are clients of the state." (Brown, 1992: 28)

This ties the masculinity described above into the biopolitical system which produces and reproduces, regulates and disciplines certain types of practices not by one mode of power but by the intersections of many, all of them contributing to a general hegemony of certain types of masculine practices toward other masculine and feminine practices.

The next chapter will show the specificities of masculine practices within the context of the state of exception argued for Agamben (1998.) referring to Schmitt. This will create an argument in which it will be possible to see that the state of exception creates certain types of hegemonic masculine practices. In the post-state of exception period I will problematize these practices and their embedded nature which fail to transform such practices in the aftermath of the war.

3. Gendering Bare Life in the Context of the Homeland War

Establishing the potential of biopolitical reading of gender surrounded by nationalist discourses in the previous chapter in this section I am concerned with the Brown's (Brown, 1992: 23) prerogative dimension of regulation and discipline of gender. Through the example of the conflict between Serbs and Croats in the Homeland War the use of Agamben's term of bare life will be shown as an intersection between two regimes of power which work on a personal level and the level of population. My aim is to build upon Agamben's term and show how gender differentiates Croatian citizenship in the period of war by giving access to different subjectivities to men and women, more specifically giving men who take up arms a double role which gives them access to sovereign power, but also reduces them to bare life, and this becomes most obvious at the moments on the battlefield.

3.1. Male motives for sacrifice in a defensive regime

In the previous chapter I have talked about the connection between masculinity and nationalism, showing the strong connection between the two. This connection is seemingly reinforced in times of state seeking processes. This is seen through history, with a lot of examples of violent masculine practices arising during revolutions and wars. A national crisis may bring drastic change in normative ways of being a man. Bearing arms in the French revolution meant not only a commitment to the nation but a new type of practice which was ascribed to being a normative male within French society. This process is connected to men in a specific way when viewed through a lens of the biopolitical regime, because carrying arms since the times that conscription of citizens started in the end of the 18th century (Howard, 2001) at the time when the biopolitical regime was becoming a primary way of societal operation. The newly arising middle class masculinities in Europe started to commodify themselves to performing the armed citizen roles (Mosse, 1996: 49) or rather it became men's duty as citizens to carry arms and protect the nation. (Braudy, 2003: 246-247) As Tosh writes,

Conversely, formal politics may be seen as a dynamic factor in maintaining and strengthening the gender order: the state acts to reinforce masculine norms – for example by imposing military conscription or by conferring tax incentives on men who marry. Together these perspectives articulate the reciprocal relationship between a gendered political realm and a masculinity sustained and disciplined by the state. Alternatively, we may look beyond that comparatively straightforward binary structure to a complex play of forces, in which masculinity is analysed in its relations of convergence and divergence with other politically charged identities – of race, sexuality, class and religion. (Tosh, 2004: 41-42)

A discourse of what it meant to be a Croat was being employed as a regulatory mechanism within a newly forming Croatian state. In order to explain the function of the regulatory regime I am using Carl Schmitt's analogy of political action and motives which can be reduced to the distinction of *friend* and *enemy*. (Schmitt, 2007: 26) He describes this enemy as the other, the stranger, an entity that is in an intense way something alien and different

...so that in extreme cases conflicts with him are possible... Emotionally the enemy²⁹ is easily treated as being evil and ugly, because every distinction, most of all the political, as the strongest and most intense of distinctions and categorizations, draws upon other distinctions for support. (ibid. 27)

He continues explaining this process of political activity by adding that this process of distinction of the enemy only exists (potentially) when two similarly established fighting collectivities confront each other. This also creates the potential of war³⁰ and civil war³¹ which are exceptional events marked with the possibility of killing human beings so they can be viewed as an "extreme consequence of enmity" (ibid. 2007: 33). War implies that a sovereign³² decision has been made on who the enemy is. In that sense war does have its own set of rules, strategies and tactics but it is also an exemplar of the sovereign power to decide. (ibid. 28-45) In a classical sense the sovereign could suspend the valid law in a state of

²⁹ Schmitt furthermore uses Hegel's definition of enemy, as a negated otherness which leads to war if the negation is mutual (Schmitt, 2007: 63)

³⁰ "armed combat between organized political entities" (Schmitt, 2007: 32)

³¹ "armed combat within an organized (political) unit" (ibid. 32)

³² In this state of exception the prince or the people could rule and in that sense they were exercising sovereign power. The possibility to suspend legal order is the actual mark of sovereignty. (ibid. 7-10) Schmitt further argues that "Because the exception is different from anarchy and chaos, order in the juristic sense still prevails even if it is not of the ordinary kind." (ibid. 12) The general norms need an everyday, normal framework in order to be applied, so that means that there are no norms applicable to anarchy, a there has to be a normal situation, and the sovereign decides on the normalcy of the situation. (ibid. 13)

exception. The state of exception refers to “any kind of severe economic or political disturbance that requires the application of extraordinary measures.” (Schmitt, 1985: 5) The most important show of this power during the state of exception is the states “right to demand from its own members the readiness to die and unhesitatingly to kill enemies.” (ibid. 46) Schmitt continues by adding that this demand must be followed by a real perceived threat to one’s own life. At the end of his essay on the concept of the political, Schmitt offers also the possibility of economic antagonism, and derived from that national and religious ones. These can lead to a political antagonism and war. (ibid. 78) By this move he also differentiates the realms of the political from the economic, national and religious, giving hierarchical primacy of the political over the other realms, but also connecting them as mutually constituting to each other.

Deriving from this it is easy to see a context in which all economic, national and religious antagonisms lead to political confrontation and war in the former Yugoslavia. There was a strong nationalist antagonism between the Croats and Serbs who wanted to establish their own imagined territorial communities. In the Yugoslav context socialist republics were transforming into liberal capitalist states. Croatia started this process in 1990; specifically this transition perceived by the Serbs living in Croatia through a lens of chauvinistic nationalism on the part of the Croats and therefore was seen as a threat, to their citizenship status and to their lives, which was furthermore inflamed by discourses of Greater Serbia which were coming for the Serbian state. (Žunec, 2007: 66-69)

This created a situation where there were two political entities who perceived each other through a lens of negated otherness. Within the Croatian population a strong defensive discourse legitimized violent practices against the enemy as identified by the sovereign state and this was clearly narrated within the narratives of the volunteers for the war.

I see the (Homeland) war as a defensive war, where the homeland was defended, where Croatia was defended. (Defender 1)

Those who went to war not only defend the nation, as an imagined motherland but also answered the literal threat to one's life and the life of his family. This is what it means that it appealed to their sense of masculinity which was tied into the protection of women and children. Today the defenders narrate the leaving as it as a proud and ceremonial moment of their willingness to go and sacrifice as something that is the natural thing to do.

And then came 1990, we were going to war with big motives, leaving two children, a wife, jobs ... I did this in order to defend them. (Defender 3)

The defense discourse was present in Zagreb, which was never affected by war as other places in Croatia, so the people in Zagreb were never in immediate danger. But still the pumping of nationalistic discourse through media and by political speeches of prominent figure such as Tuđman and Mesić, which was enhanced in the defensive discourse, was so strong that men who eventually openly resisted it felt the threat to their national identification and their masculinity.

If people were attacked they needed to defend themselves, if I was in Vukovar or somewhere else I would have to take action... I handled a gun well so that would be no problem. (Peace activist 3)

Slavenka Drakulić, the famous Croatian novelist relates, how these nationalistic discourses were narrated in the period of their explosion. She recalls her dentist, a middle class inhabitant of Zagreb who comments

'I hate it,' he says, 'the Serbs have turned me into a fierce Croatian nationalist, a thing I was sure would never happen to me.' (Drakulić, 1993: 14)

Similar discourses which created the negated otherness in Croats were present on the Serbian side. This can be seen in the way that Croatian politics is narrated in some Serbian discourse today. They see the genealogy of these discourses is traceable to the NDH regime of the 1940s. Within such narratives belief can be read out that the Croatian state was ready to exterminate Serbs, as it did during the NDH regime; “The crimes committed by the Ustaši regime between 1941 and 1945 against the innocent civilian Serb population are unparalleled in history; it was an organized attempt at exterminating an entire people and of eradicating their religion.” (Škoro, 2000: 5) This discourse was based on the presumptions of Ante Starčević (the 19th century politician) who was named the “Father of the Nation” in the modern Croatian discourse, and who had ideas similar to Hitler concerning superiority of race where for him the Serbs “were an ‘impure breed’, ‘national trash’ made up mainly, of various ‘Balkan refuse’.” (ibid.19) Starčević also started a political party named the Party of Law (Stranka prava). (ibid. 18) The Law meaning of the Croatian word Law then and today is different.³³ This kind of sentiment is prevalent in the nationalistic strivings of the Ustaša but also some other more nationalistically driven groups and their practices of doing the right thing for the nation. Also this kind of discourse stated that there were inherent differences, that the Croats were the human norm (not a superior race), and that the Serbs were of a lower breed. (ibid. 19)

Such ideas were widely accepted among the ruling political elites during the NDH regime in the 1940s. Echoes of such ideas embedded themselves within the discourses of Croatian nationalist movements during the 20th century, and a lot of them surfaced in the period of the Homeland War.

³³ In the 19th century it meant a merging of juridical law and the nationalist ideology in order to get free from the sovereign system which is presented in the sovereign ruler. In the 20 century where the nation state becomes a normative discourses word *pravo* means literally changes meaning to “right” in sense of right path to take, and signals a radically nationalistic political program.

In the beginning of the war the newly formed Croatian state did not have all the sovereign power to regulate and discipline populations. We can see that the regulatory power in the hegemonic defensive regime being formed, but the disciplinary power to actually subject the population was still lacking, and that is why the state counted mostly on volunteers to fight the war. This was felt by one Soldier who did not want to go and fight, although he felt the sadness for the losses, he was also skeptical of the practices of the state who let some of the people get sacrificed:

(talking about the Vukovar refugees he hosted) We felt the pain and woe of the peoples who were unjustly driven from their homes, but I did not think of becoming a volunteer and going to apply to a certain unit because I still did not understand it enough. I did not know what was happening, although I heard a lot of things in the news. I even cried a few times when I saw what was happening with Vukovar and the political games around what Vukovar is, the biggest victim who was not helped³⁴...
(Soldier 5)

His latter motivation for participating in the war was his family, or rather a fear for his son's life. It is important to note the difference that he did not identify with the people and the nationalistic discourses which a lot of volunteers of the war accepted.

On the 1st of May of 1995 I was mobilized, I did answer to the call, because I found out that they were looking for younger soldiers, and I thought that D. (his son) would be called. I wanted him to stay, so we older people who had experience, who had more cleverness went, for we did not want for them to become cannon fodder.
(Soldier 5)

³⁴ Refers to a belief in the Croatia that Vukovar was sacrificed in order to prepare the defense of other parts of Croatia when the Serb aggression started in 1991.

Here I am also emphasizing that there were two parts of the war the one which was mostly conducted by state conscripted volunteers³⁵ during from 1991 to 1992, and the second part which was conducted in 1995. In 1995, the Croatian state formed the disciplinary regime, seen through mandatory mobilization, in which it could call upon its citizens to fight in the war. The need of some people to volunteer in the 1990 and 1991 could partly be attributed to the relatively bad economic situation in Yugoslavia during the 1980s, a situation, as Zivkovic would argue, where

The following scenario thus unfolds—economic emasculation, at least for certain segments of the population, “depresses” the male pole of the gender balance respective to some sort of stable socialist-era position of the “gender relationship gauge.” Ethnonationalist re-traditionalizing rhetoric of recovering some ideal, proper, traditional, etc. masculinity feeds off and exploits this “depression,” and, under situations of crumbling legal order, the resultant boost to certain kinds of masculinities could account for at least some of the appeal of war... (2006: 260)

This is also informed by Jessica Greenberg who, talking about Serbia, argues that in order to understand rise of nationalism in we have to look at social, political and economic spheres of the society. (2006: 321) The economic differentiation between the soldiers will be discussed in the next chapter, for now it is important to say that different economic positions directed different men differently,

³⁵ Who organized and armed themselves by themselves on the incentive of HDZ and other political actors of the period as the modern Croatian party of Law which in turn created a paramilitary units as the Croatian Defense Force (HOS – *Hrvatske Obrambene Snage*) which were at one point disbanded, due to their front line brutality and extreme nationalist rhetoric

The formation of a full regulatory and disciplinary regime will be the topic of the next chapter. In it I will problematize the relation between disciplinary and regulatory power, when it is partly practiced by the population who should be the subjects of it.

3.2. The ambiguity of bare life for male subjects

At the beginning of the hostilities between Croats and Serbs in Croatia in 1990, the Croatian state still had not established the military institutions as one of the means of their disciplinary power. That dimension of biopower was given to the subjects who were partly regulated by the state, especially through the nationalistic discourse, which called for a defense against the potential full aggression by the Serbs. All of the Defenders and some Soldiers I have interviewed stated that they were joining volunteer regiments which were forming at that time. They started to arm themselves and carry guns in Zagreb, tuning directly into sovereign power, as the state did encourage this but at that time did not have a lot of means to discipline the practices of carrying weapons and violence against Serbs in Zagreb. This of course becomes problematic, because the state only regulated military sanctioned weapons from 1991 when all the unofficial regiments were regulated and enrolled into the newly formed Croatian Army (*Hrvatska Vojska*, HV). But this examples shows that there are possibilities for subjects to tune into sovereign power and have power to legitimacy kill the enemy without being disciplined to do so by the state. This point is also made by Robert Hayden who argues that the process of the breakup of Yugoslavia did not mean the reorganization on the basis of the established republics during the Yugoslav era, but were “accompanied by new social boundaries in which preexisting social divisions attain(ed) new meaning. Thus, just as partition transforms the demarcations of territory, social boundaries within the population of that territory... (were)...also transformed.” (2000: 33) He continues by saying that both the process of partition and the state are liminal, and the possibilities of whose state

it is, and how will the population of this state be defined are open. When these options are open the possibility of illegal practices, such as rape on the basis of ethnicity, will appear but are not likely afterwards. (ibid. 33) The state of exception argued for by Schmitt is one such instance where the normative order is suspended by the sovereign power but in the case of Croatia a new sovereign power was emerging and revolved around the newly established Croatian state and at the point when the volunteers armed themselves the state was not yet firmly established, which is a argument for its liminality, at least up to the point when they were introduced in the HV. At this point contesting citizenship was wide spread practice, because those arming themselves identified with nationalistic discourses which were latter institutionalized by the national state which was trying to consolidate on the national basis. (Ramet, 2008: 162)

By this stage I wish to make clear that I see biopower taking the role of sovereign power in modern liberal states. It has the possibility to both regulate and discipline populations, and on those merits it has the possibility to regulate subjects that are perceived as enemies of the population, and in the others sense it has the power to discipline the population to go into war for the nation's sake. What is important to mention, drawing on the argument of Agamben, is that in some places these two modes of power intersect and create bare life. (1998: 11) Agamben's interpretation on the biopolitical regime is an important thing here as well.

According to Foucault, a society's "threshold of biological modernity" is situated at the point at which the species and the individual as a simple living body become what is at stake in a society's political strategies. After 1977, the courses at the Collège de France start to focus on the passage from the "territorial State" to the "State of population" and on the resulting increase in importance of the nation's health and biological life as a problem of sovereign power, which is then gradually transformed

into a “government of men” (Dits et écrits, 3: 719). “What follows is a kind of bestialization of man achieved through the most sophisticated political techniques. For the first time in history, the possibilities of the social sciences are made known, and at once it becomes possible both to protect life and to authorize a holocaust.” In particular, the development and triumph of capitalism would not have been possible, from this perspective, without the disciplinary control achieved by the new bio-power, which, through a series of appropriate technologies, so to speak created the “docile bodies” that it needed. (ibid. 10)

This has great importance in showing how the regulatory and disciplinary regimes of the Croatian state converge in the body of its population, but what I want to argue further is that the gendering of this body is also visible within the sphere of this body’s citizenship where certain male citizens have a right to carry arms. This is derived from the sense the citizen subject is always in a situation of duality; he is a citizen with all the rights and privileges, but simultaneously he is susceptible to the authority of the state, and his status can in a time of exception such as war, be changed into bare life and become secondary to the preservation or establishing of a specific biopolitical regime. A male citizen although he can be reduced to bare life, still has the status of a subject who is obligated to carry arms, and in that sense he is included in the sovereign power to kill, at the very least he is a tool of it.

Agamben argues that in the sovereign sphere “it is permitted to kill (bare life) without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life – that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed – is the life that has been captured in this sphere” (Agamben, 1998: 53) by the sovereign regime thus being included in the juridical system by being

excluded from it.³⁶(ibid. 12) Agamben gives examples of bare life as Jews (and others) in concentration camps during the German Nazi regime. These subjects have effectively been symbolically and actually killed off from German society and reduced to bare life within these concentration camps but still they cannot be ritually sacrificed in the sense that they cannot be martyrs within the Nazi biopolitical regime.

The fertile ground for a subject becoming bare life is the state of exception, and in this time of war which as Schmitt has argued is a circumstance of extreme enmity, in which the holder of sovereign power, in this case the Croatian state, can impose a non-normative order to its subjects (Schmitt, 1985.); the Croatian citizens. Already I have mentioned the possibility of male duality in this kind of regulation of bare life in which certain men tap into sovereign power by carrying arms. Agamben tackles the issue of sovereign power partly being in the hands of the subjects of the sovereign power, but just hints at the possibility and the problematization of such subjects. He elaborates: “the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially *hominess sacri*, and *home sacer* is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns.” (Agamben, 1998: 53) He solidifies this example with a concrete example which played out in the Nazi regime:

The fact is that the National Socialist Reich marks the point at which the integration of medicine and politics, which is one of the essential characteristics of modern biopolitics, began to assume its final form. This implies that the sovereign decision on bare life comes to be displaced from strictly political motivations and areas to a more ambiguous terrain in which the physician and the sovereign seem to exchange roles. (ibid. 83)

³⁶ Meaning that homo sacer has its citizenship statuses suspended, and on that merit it is included in the system which regulates it.

This applies to the military subject, or the soldier who at certain points exchanges positions with the sovereign/biopolitical state. The ambiguity of his position is more evident because at some points the subject of the soldier is reduced to bare life is one of the defenders is my research has narrated. They were able to carry arms and through their narrations a sense of empowerment can be felt, but at other times they were afraid, they did not know where or when they could die, they felt powerless. One of the defenders narrates this kind of situation:

We were (on the field) distributed around the houses, and I was distanced by a house or two from the Četniks... and we were changing every two hours two of us changed guard, and the days were passing by, they would shell us and we would wait and then shoot at them, and this night we had to shoot every 5 minutes. The commander told us to fire every five minutes, so they do not get close ... this was a first moment like practice. I did not understand this (shooting at people), it was like in the movies for me, maybe it was not like that but that is how I felt, it was okay for me, great ... after we lost this place, we were in retreat, and only about that 20 kilometer retreat I could talk for two days. We were alone, in the dark, you could not see a finger in front of you... we were hungry and thirsty... we found a well... when it was my turn to drink from the helmet, I could not drink... I could not drink a drop of water, it was because of fear or whatever. (Defender 2)

In the context of the Homeland war I argue that in a state of exception that is war specifically some men are reduced to bare life on the battlefield which allows the biopolitical state to continue functioning by explaining these bare lives as a sacrifice of certain eligible bodies of its society in the name of the nation. This process is best summarized by Alan Feldman how argues “The body made into a political artifact by an embodied act of violence is no less a

political agent than the author(s) of violence.” (Feldman, 1991: 7) In his interpretation of Foucault Feldman claims that “Power, as Foucault has amply documented, becomes spatialized. It is contingent on the command of space and the command of those entities that move within politically marked spaces. The body becomes a spatial unit of power, and the distribution of these units in space constructs sites of domination.” (ibid. 8)

I argue that when this is put in a context of war and soldiers their citizenship status does not come exclusively from their (the Croatian) state, but at least two sovereign entities have to work in unison to create the partial suspension of the soldier citizenship status. In the case of Croatia vs. Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serb rebels bare life for Croatia were Serb soldiers and civilians, and vice versa for the other side. So practically both set of soldiers were put in a bare life situation in which they could have been killed but not sacrificed publicly. The executions of prisoners, which can be interpreted as a ritual act, were attempted to be hidden from the media and the public by the state whose soldier committed these acts which implies that this could be seen as a ritual act which opposes the definition of this life being killable without consequences. In creates martyrs for the other side, and furthermore discredits most of the violent practices of the offending side.

Expanding on Agamben’s theory both of these sovereign subjects declare that the soldiers from the other side are that life which is killable without consequence but cannot be sacrificed. This interplay of two sovereigns creates a situation of soldiers fighting for bare lives with the enemy. This experience of being *Homo Sacer* has an effect on the narration of these subjects because although they were seen as heroes by the state and in a normative pre-deployment society, deployment and in their practices of killing with a weapon in another sense they were also regarded as “cannon fodder” when they were opposed to the other side

on the front line. Also the term civilian death comes into play here, which is something that is officially illegal in the rules of warfare (which does not mean that it is not being committed on a large scale) and the possibility to kill a soldier in battle is legitimate, and in that sense does not comply to criminal charges furthermore making the case for them to be killed soldier without consequence, which, in large part, makes them bare life. Other recollections through their narrations exemplify the situations where these subjects were killable although in which they had a right to take up arms and shoot in order to defend their lives:

...we ended up in the caverns, and on the top of us there were tanks, and here there was my first contact with the war. There was a little before when I was in Split, people were coming from the places where there were clashes, but I was not paying attention to that. So that was my first contact with the war, it was in a way very direct and did not give me space to moralize I took up the rifle... (talking about the skirmishes with Serbs) I've seen this situation like somebody was firing at you and you were returning fire, it was not very emotional, I was not angry... I was not in the war because of national pride, the war just came to me (to his doorstep). (Soldier 1)

We did not care for nationalism and other things. We were fighting there for our bare lives. (Soldier 6)

Of course in this section I focused on the citizen as a soldier and his duality, but in the time of strong nationalistic discourses which regulated what it means to be a Croat, there were also practices which opposed that, and subjects of these practices were also Croatian men, who did not lose their citizenship status.

3.3. Discourses of resistance to sovereign power

The myth of Europe, of our belonging to the European family and culture, even as poor relations is gone. We have been left alone with our newly-won independence, our new states, new symbols, new autocratic leaders, but with no democracy at all. We are left standing on a soil slippery with blood, engulfed in a war that will go on for God knows how long. (Drakulić, 1993: 3)

Slavenka Drakulić's description of the state of affairs in Croatia during the signals that there were subjects in Croatia who resisted the dominant discourse of defense during the Homeland War and felt that the state was unjust and autocratic. Certain practices which did not coincide with the dominant regulatory regime started to appear in the public spaces. There were people who were not convinced of the dominant discourse of aggression towards the Croatian nation, mostly these were people far away from the actual places of violent practices in a physical sense, but they still felt the regulatory practices of the state:

In Zagreb I did not notice the war so much, for war you need to inject fuel ... it was very hard to start a war here, some people really needed convincing. (Peace activist 3)

Others did identify the regulatory regime more strongly but were still not ready, or rather regulated and disciplined to go to war.

Peace activism was very repulsive to me, and at that moment I said to T. I would like to participate but I would not like to go to these gathering of "Stop the War in Croatia", I am not cut out for that, at which moment she said that is not what we do, we do something else, and that is how I got involved ... I had an understanding of why the people did not like peace activism. I did not have an idea then of what that

was (peace activism), they were to me unclear people (*Ljudi*)³⁷ weaklings, who basically instead of doing the right thing are saying silly things. (Peace activist 2)

In earlier stages he was unsure of the practices of the peace activist and felt in his environment that a need for defense against aggression has arisen. The only way to be a man was to take up arms and defend ones homes and the ones that did not he saw as “weaklings” or not real men. In the end he resisted this call due to the social circle he was involved in which were mostly people who were in academic circles.

At first these people were skeptical and unready to act but when the state started to discipline subjects through suspension of their rights to enable them to go to war, these male subjects felt ready to act, and tactically practice other types of legitimate discourses within the Croatian context.

I was amazed that in the new constitution, when thinking about people like Tuđman, had these two points: one that there was no death penalty, and the other the basis for the conscientious objection. But then months after that, that point was suspended and this was a calling sign for me and some other people in the ARK³⁸ to get involved with this issue.(of the right of conscientious objection) (Peace activist 5)

From the perspective of human rights it is interesting to see that Croatian citizens did not have the right of calling upon conscientious objection (*prigovor savjesti*) and not serving in the army or the reserves. This situation changed after the war when the practice of objecting to war was institutionalized, carrying with itself the marks of honor of a different kind, and did not emasculate the subjects of those practices in the eyes of others in their micro contexts

³⁷ When he says *ljudi* he means men, which were set up with his previous narrations about his time in Zagreb during the war.

³⁸ Anti-War Campaign (*Anti Ratna Kampanja*)

(such as the NGO scene and similar places). These practices can be called anti-nationalist (Jansen, 2005: 87) because they were not based on the differences of Serbs and Croats but rather on the resistances towards these discourses of nationalism. These practices were not institutionalized; rather they were, using the analogy of de Certeau, tactical because they were planned and executed but also not very visible in the mainstream discourse. These kind of practices were also connected to the academic discourses because the people practicing them were mostly students, whose sense of masculinity was connected to academic practices, such as legitimate knowledge production.

As motioned before the biopolitical system was not as totalizing as it was for instance in Nazi Germany so anti-nationalist practices were allowed but not accepted by the majority of the political elites. This meant that there was more choice for men as opposed to the situation for refugees in a concentration camp. In another sense there were seemingly more potential practices through which they could confirm state their masculinity. The state system even allowed clear cut bipolar ones, such as peace activism opposed to going to war.

The question I came up with after conducting my research is who are the eligible subjects who seemingly resist dominant discourse of defense, and derived from this the specific regulatory and disciplinary regime? Provisionally I would argue that this is the place where other mechanisms of regulation, such as class come into play and discursively regulate and discipline eligible subjects whose citizenship gets partially suspended in order to die for the nation. The next chapter will elaborate this through the problems of regulating soldier subject after the war, which in fact is due to the changes in the biopolitical regime in the post-war period.

4. Analyzing narratives: Group Embeddedness within Post-war Narrative Production

The post-war regulation of soldiers is a key question I examine in this section. Up until this point I problematized their ambiguous subjectivity during the war which also incorporated an exposure to possession of sovereign power. I want to problematize this even further in the post-war period in which embedded practices of war time do not have the same meaning and legitimacy as before. This problematizes the regulation of soldiers within the post-war period due to their involvement in violent practices, and its connection to discourses of hegemonic masculinity and nationalism, which are transforming in the period of peace. The problem arises when soldier subjects are not conforming to the changed biopolitical regime, so a new type of regulation comes into being in order for them to be subjugated. The change of the state regulatory and disciplinary regime happened because there was no longer a need for able bodies to battle with the Serb enemy, and the imagined Croatian state was consolidated. The problem was that those who volunteered went to war, risked their lives, and for the promise of a heroic status of the defender, and most of them returned embedded in those discourses. In order to understand the changes in practices and hegemonic positions, or rather the conflict between dominant discourses, I will first present ethnographic notes on the contemporary Croatian period, which will allow me to position the analysis of the defender category and the strong connection of most of its subjects in the pre-war class identifications.

4.1. Ethnographic notes from the field: Merging the nationalist and anti-nationalist discourses in the contemporary Croatian context

The defensive discourse was a very strong force during the Homeland War. I already discussed the genealogy of it in the ideas of Ante Starčević and his Party of Law. Today such ideas still echo in thoughts of the radical right in Croatia and parties such as The Croatian Party of Law/Right (HSP) and The Croatian Pure Party of Law/Right (HČSP). Also such sentiments are still embedded in popular culture, especially in songs from famous and controversial singers who draw their inspiration from the Homeland War but also from the myths presented by Starčević. Singers using nationalist esthetic in their songs, Marko Perković “Thompson”³⁹ and Miroslav Škoro, call themselves patriots and not nationalists, and this division is an interesting one. In the modern Croatian context calling oneself a nationalist has a negative connotation, so people who identify with nationalistic discourses; call themselves patriots or Lovers of the Land (*domoljubi*) which is a tactical use. They understand the political implications, stigmatization,⁴⁰ bring and take another kind of identity which is as a patriot and which can accept other kind of discourses, such as EU and Human Rights, but in the core it still derives from the othering of other ethnicities. In that sense Bosnia was a problematic part of the Croatian National Policy and the support for invading Bosnia was not substantial. This intervention went beyond the defensive war discourse, and that was noted by the international scene as well, as apparent in the prosecution of the Croatian political elite over that. This was not further problematized in the Croatian mainstream discourse due to timely deaths of the two of the most prominent figures of that intervention: president Tuđman and the minister of defense Gojko Šušak. (Hockenos, 2003: 19) Also the military action *Oluja* became important, to those who are now practicing

³⁹ A nickname picked up in the Homeland War, refers to the Thompson submachine gun

⁴⁰ that being called a nationalist in a way that it was possible during the war when it was related to othering and killing of Serbs in order to protect the homeland

nationalistic discourses it is seen as the final blow to the Serbian aggression, and on the other side those who practice anti-nationalistic practices see it as site of the violation of the human rights, due to the killing of the civilians that occurred there.

Similar discourses visibly surfaced again last year in Croatia. In mid April of 2011. a guilty verdict was passed against the Croatian generals, Ante Gotovina and Malden Markač, who commanded the HV in *Oluja*. At the time I was doing an internship in the CMS, and got this perspective mostly from that peace activist position, which was largely positive towards these verdicts. What happened in the main Croatian media discourse was a different thing. Up until the verdicts the Croatian media were pumping up an atmosphere of positivity and possibility towards a not guilty verdict⁴¹. After the verdicts the media were perceived by the NGOs as biased towards reporting on the events in the sense that they were twisting facts about the war, not taking into account the civilian casualties which were made during Oluja.⁴² In the NGO scene, especially the ones I was working with like CMS and Documenta and which I see as progressive and left-leaning, even the most moderate people were convinced that they should have gotten the guilty verdict.

Gotovina may have done nothing but follow orders, but he had to know that they were bad orders and in that sense it was just for him to get convicted. (Peace activist 1)

In order to broaden my perspective I went to a protest held for the generals in Zagreb immediately after the verdicts. Most of the people in the protest were ex-soldiers, or rather defenders who felt personally offended by these verdicts because they thought the whole war

⁴¹ <http://www.jutarnji.hr/zagreb--mimohod-branitelj-ka-podrska-generalima-u-haagu/939018/> Last checked: 31st of May 2012., <http://www.jutarnji.hr/makarska--plakat-podrske-generalu-gotovini/938985/?foto=1> Last checked: 31st of May 2012.

⁴² <http://www.novilist.hr/Vijesti/Hrvatska/Javnoj-televiziji-zamjereno-da-dezinformira-i-manipulira> Last checked: 31st of May 2012., <http://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/141921/Trazimo-sankcije-zbog-propagandne-nakaze-na-HTV-u.html> Last checked: 31st of May 2012.

in which they fought was righteous and no it has been condemned. They were calling upon nationalist symbols, viewing the generals as heroes, and blaming the EU and Croatian political elites for the verdicts.

These events showcase the still very dominant defensive discourse which is at this point contested by the political elites and defenders. Also there are other discourses, such as the human rights one which influences the ways in which state regulates the Croatian population.

The human right sphere has grown very important especially after 2000 and the change of government, when Tuđman's nationalist party lost power for the first time. Two of the peace activist I interviewed narrated the change:

It all changed in 2000 when the coalition came to power, we were shocked when Đurđa Adlešić⁴³ called us to participate in the session of the committee for the national security in the parliament... and up till that point it was unthinkable that ARK could enter the parliament, that was phenomenal, and it was phenomenal that a large number of people started to go to the civil service, because in 1998 nobody even thought about it, we had a hotline for that and nobody would call... and when it all got liberalized⁴⁴ hundreds of people started calling. (Peace activist 1)

At that specific moment (early 2000) I was feed up with the volunteers a little and said Volonterčići (diminutive of volunteer), and he said (a celebrity that came to help them out) to me; "Don't call them that, you (the peace activists) are doing very important and serious things. (Peace Activist 2)

⁴³ In the period of the coalition government (2000-2003) she was the head of the Parliamentary Committee for Informing, Informatization and the Media (*Odbor za informiranje, informatizaciju i medije*)

⁴⁴ Meaning the period of the coalition government 2000-2003, when the NGO accounts stated that the political climate was more accepting of the NGO discourses (Kekez, et. al. 2010)

They both state how the political climate was far more accepting of NGO discourses. It started to include NGO input in their political decisions, and that changed the discourses surrounding defenders who were not looked at unproblematically anymore, but were actually potential human rights violators, who could face criminal charges, by the ITCY in Hague or by the Croatian government. The involvement of the ITCY was something that was felt even during the end of the Tuđman regime.⁴⁵ These possibilities drew them even further in the defender identity as a resistance towards such discourses of criminality. They could always call upon the discourse through which they defend their country by killing.

Some of the peace activists even showed a tendency to believe that the problems of the Homeland War should have been surpassed a long time ago:

To me (this ethnic violence today) is boring, I cannot believe that we live in two realities one where people like us, and the other where people can still shout “Kill the Serb”, so I am little surprised, it is so boring to me, I cannot look and listen to it anymore. (Peace activist 1)

The possibility of the Homeland War not being fought for absolutely just causes, and in that sense the possibility of criminalization of it is also seen in the narratives of those who engaged in violent practices during the war. For instance the new Croatian minister for the defenders (ministar branitelja) Predrag Matić “Fred”, is hesitant to say whether he killed anyone during the war. When he narrates the moments of combat he denies killing and rather talks of letting the enemy soldier run away⁴⁶. A type of masculine narrative could be read out

⁴⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PzVz-BqZ7I> Last checked: 31st of May 2012., a segment showing president Tuđman talking to the Croatian generals about the possibility of being called in front of the ITCY. In it he uses the discourse of defense and national unity in order to counter these possibilities

⁴⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmQIqN1gVVI&feature=related> Last checked: 31st of May 2012., An interview with Predrag Matić on the famous Croatian talk show “*Nedeljom u dva*” (Sunday at two)

of this, one which does not allow the killing of a weaker opponent, although the perceived weakness is a very subjective category. This could also be attributed to a calling on his sense of masculinity and honor, which is requested by his war time comrades, which explained that he was on the battlefield, but also which would absolve him any kind of incrimination for violating the human rights of anybody. The same practice is shown in the interviews I have conducted. For example:

When you look at it realistically, there is no war, there is not, in the world in which there has not been a war crime committed. There is none, so according to that, how many times has America lead a war, but never on its terrain, but around the world, how many war crimes have they, for instance committed? For instance there was shown a vulgar act of a soldier on dead people, but it was a very small number of people (who committed such acts), because I cannot believe that something like that can happen. Some of our people were boasting that they have cut off a Četnik's ear. Wait a second. He is either lying, or maybe he really did do it, and if he really did then he is really so stupid that he cannot be stupider. (Defender 1)

The people of a more urban origin, who now live in it and aspire to urban Western values and see themselves as cosmopolitan, who were in defensive discourses are today very critical of those periods of their lives. One Soldier spoke about the beginning of the war as seen from an urban perspective:

(During the beginning of the war in urban setting) We were all into patriotism, but the kind that does not exclude others, at least I was doing it like that. We maybe did talk jokes between us on the account of Serbs ... but when I look at that now, from a certain (temporal) distance, it was a little ugly but it was that kind of time... (Soldier 4)

While attending the gathering, at which I was present as an observer, organized by an NGO called *Documenta*⁴⁷ Croatian president Ivo Josipović⁴⁸ talked balancing the defensive and human right discourse, confirming the “righteous nature” of the Homeland War, but also talking about the victims of the war to whom he wished fair conduct, and promised his support. The strategic move he made was one in which he divided politics from crimes, and in that sense the dominant discourse of defense from criminal discourses.

In this context the defender category has to be examined, because only by knowing the discourses available can the practices of subjects who identify with the defender and other categories be understood.

4.2. Problematic of the post-war regulations: being a Defender in times of peace

During the war the category of defender carried with itself parts of sovereign power. The soldiers who practiced the discourses of defense were tapped into sovereign power, but after the war this category was viewed more as a social category for subjects who were unable to give up practices brought by great expectations of the new state, and their role as heroes in that state. The regulation of the soldiers who still felt strongly positive about their practices was done by legalizing the defender category, ensuring that every veteran was granted privileges in Croatian society, such as defender add-ons on pensions⁴⁹ and advantages when

⁴⁷ Their mission is “dealing with the past” in the Croatian context

⁴⁸ He is originally from the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP) but when he became president he had to suspend his membership due to the constitutional requirements which are based on the presumption that he is the president of all the Croatian people.

⁴⁹ <http://www.mirovinsko.hr/default.asp?!ID=1289> Last checked: 31st of May 2012.

being considered for hiring.⁵⁰ This is manifested in their narratives when they say that nobody can understand what they went through in war. They were ready to sacrifice for the nation and, in their perception, nobody else could claim that. This imagining delineates them from the others in society, and becomes the most important argument for them being privileged in the peace time.

I had to go a few times a day on the front to reaper the connections (radio connections) ... after that I was deployed to the operation Maslinica, and here it was very ugly, here there were life threatening situations. Thankfully I managed to escape a death situation, but those are traumas that could not been forgotten, or suppressed with no conversation especially not at home, with somebody that cannot understand that kind of a situation, who was not in a wartime situation. (Defender 1)

What I am arguing for with my research is that the gap in the post war regulation of soldier subjects I wish to show is the potential problems of the re-socialization of the soldiers, who had been in parts reduced to specific situations of holding sovereign power but then again became bare life, now within the “normal” post-war society. Here I wish to examine Ruth Miller’s argument about female refugees, and rework it to suit the after-war regulation of soldiers, their sense of masculinity and national identity.

In this sense, Ruth Miller argues that the modern biopolitical states construct a female norm that that is brought about by a collapse of certain institutional categories. She describes this collapse through two processes of the post-Enlightenment era: “The first of these processes is the collapse of sexual and reproductive crime into a single category. The second is the more widely noted collapse of law, politics, and war into a single category.” (Miller, 2007: 153)

⁵⁰ <http://www.uprava.hr/default.aspx?id=549> Last checked: 31st of May 2012.

Both of these processes contribute to the notion of the women as the norm and men as the counterparts of these norms and furthermore create a situation within the biopolitical context where the womb becomes,

...the predominant biopolitical space, it is women's bodily borders that have taken the concept of consent to its logical conclusion. It is thus the citizen with the womb who has become the political neutral – rather than grudgingly granting women the artificial phalluses assumed by liberal theory, one can in fact advance an argument that men instead have been granted the artificial wombs assumed by its biopolitical counterpart. (ibid. 149)

Not to say that socialist Yugoslavia was a pre-enlightenment state, but all of these collapses were more intense when the nationalist discourse based on the Croatian and Serbian ethnic differences, became hegemonic in the pre-war and war period. By talking about the collapse of categories in a very practical sense Miller genders bare life. The Miller example influenced my approach to the Croatian situation where a similar gendering of subjects occurred and created the norm of male defenders. Using Miller's concept of collapse I searched for a possibility of collapsing categories within the Croatian war context but by focusing on the male subjects. The first collapse happens at the end of the pre-war period and during the war and it concerns the category of national identity where imagined biology, culture and to an extent law collapse and define two main groups in the conflict, ethnic Croats and ethnic Serbs. The framework of the imagined biology is closely linked with the idea that Croats and Serbs are genetically very different, and from that difference the potential for othering is partly realized. Even today these discourses are running around, especially in more politically right oriented scientific circles.⁵¹ The framework for culture in this specific context is

⁵¹ <http://www.draganprimorac.com/?p=5294> Last checked: 31st of May 2012.

language, script, religion, and history of the two peoples. The third framework is law, which constituted Yugoslavia as a federal state composed of ethnically based administrative units such as Croatia, Serbian, Slovenia, etc. This collapse allowed the newly forming Croatian state to have an ethnic other to which it would regulate and consolidate its own ethnic citizens.

The second collapse signals the potential of creating willing bodies that would go into war by collapsing of categories of nationalism and gender. Specifically the collapse of male and national discourses into a defender discourse⁵² which, referring to Schmitt's idea of a friend and enemy distinction, is the ultimate political friend which opposes the political enemy. The category of the defender was also imagined by unifying national (Croatian), religious (Catholic), economic (lower income) spheres. The defender had, especially in 1990, a sovereign right to kill the other, the Serb/Četnik, but he could also be killed without direct consequence to his killer by that other. I argue that these two categories collapse and create the defender category which is a strong category of possible identification for militarized Croatian males.

The second move Miller makes using a biopolitical framework is an argument which voices a female norm which allows the participants of a bare life situation to be regulated within a post-state of exception phase. This is something that Penelope Deutscher does when she argues for inclusion of female reproductive bodies within Agamben's writing on bare life. She sees the potential of gendering of bare life in a situation where the state of exception is only rendered into law for particular question such as abortion. After a period of time "the exception becomes regularized and regulative". (Deutscher, 2008: 60) In the context of my

⁵² A discourse of defending the country and family by killing the other, the Serb. In turn being killable for the preservation of the Croatian state.

work I talk about the general societal state of exception such as war and that is why I will use the post-war and post-state of exception periods as synonyms.

My focus is on Miller's work, rather than Deutschers, because Miller does theorize periods of war and post-war where there was at times a liminal state in place (when people were arming and not being disciplined by the state for it), but mostly a state of exception defined by the sovereign power. She shows that in the post-war period a new norm is created for the displaced female victims of war in order to make them citizens. When looking at this newly created norm, Miller already said that it would not mean that it means privilege for the subjects that are occupying it but rather that male counterparts derive and benefit from that norm. (Miller, 2007: 149)

In practice Miller uses the examples from Bosnia (ibid. 140) and Somalia (ibid. 142) where the female norm is created due to the need of regulating the female refugee population which had no civil rights inscribed within their refugee status. In one sense they came into this status by being violated in the context of war, and in that sense they were biologically active, but politically passive. As mentioned before they, did not enjoy citizen status and rights during and shortly after the state of exception. By regulating them the state meant to transform biologically active, but politically passive refugees into biologically passive and politically active citizens. (ibid. 140)

I argue that in the case of the post-war Croatia the subjects of bare life were normalized and disciplined within the category of defender which shifted meaning from the one held during the Homeland War. Their citizen status was in a significant part defined by a strong possibility to take privileges derived from their willingness to sacrifice for the nation. Here I address the gap in gender and nation research which does not problematize the post-war regulation of violent and nationalistic hegemonic masculinity during the war. In fact after the

war such men become involved in complicit practices within the Croatian state, but this does not give insight into their potential subjugation, their struggle and their inability to situate their pre-war and war heroic status within the post-war society, nor how their practices give legitimization to the biopolitical system in a different way from how it was given in the war context. Their status was a kind of norm within the Croatian context. It transformed the subject of the defender from a biologically active (giving his biological life for the nation) and politically passive (being on the front, and being suspended from “normal” civilian life) into a biologically passive (not being involved in violent war time practices) and politically active (though the initiation to defender status and organizations that had a political voice). This inability and rejection by society is visible when now identified defenders talk about their return from the front, and in that sense the defender category is there to regulate their practices. They talk about their inability to adapt to the “peace” times, their rejection and insensitivity by the society and only the possibility to take upon a defender category to be suitably placed within society.

“When I returned from war I could not calm down for six months, I was full of adrenalin and full of (thoughts of) events from the war. Being in a battle every day is different from when a person lives in peace. War is a totally different state where a person releases all the brakes he has in civil society in the time of peace and he needs time to adapt, also as the case when we needed to adapt to a war situation, from a peaceful situation ... from peace you come to a situation where everything alive wants to kill you, an enemy wants to kill you, and now (in peace time) you are put in a situation where you need to calm down... I got fired from my job in a bank because I went to defend the country, I am not complaining, but you cannot act like that towards

a man ... this was a problem, I had no money, I had to live with my parents ... it was like that until I got the status of the defender...” (Defender 4)

Being a defender is the dominant way these subjects can be regulated within the Croatian context. First of all there is a whole ministry dedicated to the issues of defenders (*Ministarstvo branitelja*⁵³). Also through them their counterparts, wives and children get privileges and even statuses which entitle privileges. For instance, the wives of the killed defenders got pensions, the children also got stipends and at one point they had advantages in being accepted to universities. This was happening during the all political regime in the Croatia, and this specific practice of advantage when being accepted at the universities in the period between 2005 and 2008.

The defender status that they were given and the practices they perform are not hegemonic anymore as in war but are now marginalized opposed the new types of hegemonic practices which arose in the Croatian society, to which defenders are seen as the other who are a problem to the society. This is not so clear cut as in the war; there are many legitimate discourses in the Croatian context, such as the human rights, neoliberal and the defender discourse, and they are all now struggling for the hegemonic position. In the next section I will talk about conflicting discourses in the contemporary Croatian society that, positioning defenders as the ones of the groups actively struggle to attain the hegemonic position in the state.

⁵³ <http://www.branitelji.hr/> Last checked: 31st of May 2012.

4.3. Class difference as a basis for difference in regulation

The problems of hegemonic masculinities established through war and their relegation in the post-war contexts is something that Ana-Marie Alosno talks about in her work through a discursive perspective. (Alonso, 1988.)

She gives the example of the Serrano farmers in Mexico during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The 19th century was a period of "state-led" nationalism, and there was a need for a general homogenization of the population. In that sense the imagined enemy was seen within the indigenous population. In order to defeat the Indian population, the farmers were mobilized as representatives of "civilized" people who clashed with representatives of the "barbarian" peoples, the Indians whose savagery has to be put in order. The model of masculine practices of the farmers were based on gender discourse and ethnic pride, honor based on their performance as warriors against "barbarian" peoples. Besides the battlefield the arable land also became part of the constructed masculinity because working on this land was their way to feed their family. This intersected with a discourse which romanticized and objectified women as the symbols of ethnic and sexual purity that must be protected from the "barbarians". (Alonso, 1988: 14-15)

In the mid 19th century the dominant discourses were transformed. A state-building nationalist phase was replaced with the consolidation and capitalist production phases. Within these new discursive flows practices of masculinity of the Serrano farmers were no longer compatible with the dominant public discourse and in this sense their hegemonic position became a marginalized one. Their practices were no longer strategic for changing discursive context, and they became practices of resistance to the new dominant discourses. Their masculinity became the "barbaric" in relation to the new "civilized" urban practices of masculinity. (ibid. 16-26)

The theme of conflicting masculinities is also described by Jessica Greenberg in her analysis of the Serbian context in the early 21st century. Specifically her topic is the 2003 assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. Greenberg analyzed the event of his funeral through media discourses. She detected that in period two types of dominant discourses of masculinity were expressed. One of the discourses of masculinity displayed the pro-European, democratic, civilized family man who was embodied in Đinđić. (Greenberg, 2006: 132-139) On the other hand, the representatives of his killers were uncivilized, undemocratic, clan, non-procreative, the radical nationalist models of masculinity which Serbia does not need. (Greenberg, 2006: 139-143) This example also shows the discursive crisis state, in other words conflicts at the institutional level between two potential institutional discursive practices. They also show how different gender subjects are desirable in different context. Both show how cultured, and hint on middle-class practices are the ones desirable in times of peace.

I have found similar notions in my analysis as well. In the beginning of my work I started by dividing my interviewees into three groups based on their current identifications and their practices during the war. I found that they identify with certain discourses, and I deduced that that was primarily on the merit of their class status. Sasson-Levy find with Israeli soldiers is useful in this context. She found that

The soldiers in blue-collar roles accept the dominance of combat masculinity, but at the same time they find alternative anchors for their own masculinity which by-passes the public sphere and emphasizes autonomy, independence, and responsibility for the family. (Sasson-Levy, 2003: 339)

Furthermore she argues that such individuals get “partial gains”, although still being oppressed, by being incorporated in the margins of the nation. They are being included in the

army from the low-income position in society to lower ranks in the army, which are usually the positions on the front, and in that way the state creates a dual mechanism of subjugation. They can resist but the state is keeping them from questioning the status of national citizenship by keeping them in this double bind, where it can be always argued that their loyalties to their class must come second to the loyalty of the nation. (Sasson-Levy, 2003: 340)

Most of the Defender population I interviewed had humble beginnings; they were educated in vocational schools⁵⁴ and were brought up in suburban areas. They were usually the bread winners of the family and their household, which is a recurring theme when theorizing working class masculinity (Greenberg, 2007., McDowell, 2003., Weinstein, 2004.). This kind of working class masculinity entails pride connected to the practices performed in the work place. This started to collapse in the socialist regime, with a move from a heavy industry towards the service industries. This problem of changing economic circumstances and the loss of the bread winner position ultimately lead some men to war where they hoped to regain “real manhood” (Zivkovic, 2006), but after the war their status did not change. For the defenders, working after the war was a problem. Most of them lost connections to work, and could not get a job. This inability was very frustrating. They became a social category.⁵⁵

“You lose yourself in normal society and consciously and unconsciously you think that you do not need help... but in that process you lose yourself ... you are not tolerant and tolerated by others... and you think that everybody has to understand

⁵⁴High schools (*strukovne škole*) specializing certain crafts, such as plumbing, service of electronic appliances, etc.

⁵⁵ In Croatia social category (*socijalna kategorija*) is ascribed to people who cannot support themselves and in that sense need assistance from the state

you... but you want a normal life, and work, but you are not creating it... you are losing yourself... through time you are losing yourself... ” (Defender 3)

Some of this was handled by giving most of them a possibility to retire on the basis of suffering from PTSD.⁵⁶ It was the solution to how to handle this new social category within the Croatian society. One of the self-identified defenders who today works in the government on taking care of the medical problems of war veterans talks about this process.

“PTSD is for me a social category, and now we are returning to the story of where you will go after war time. There is no firm, no job, and the state says we will give him the diagnosis of PTSD and he (the defender) will be retired, and these “PTSD” people, there are 50 of them ... then 20% are getting treatments, others are not, they have achieved their goal, they have retirement and that is it ... when you take (a closer look) these cases you see that the last treatment was at the time when he received his status.” (Defender 6)

People who managed to work after the war also detected this process, and see the potential for stigmatization, reaffirming the bread winner model.

“(while talking about drug treatments of PTSD) I do not think that is good,⁵⁷ I think that inability to manage how it was done, first a selection has to be made who is for that and who is not, that emotionality can be cured... and the society could have reacted differently, the people could have been helped differently, not to make them satisfied through a pension but through work. Through work you create, you save your family, like an active member of your family, like a father that carries in himself

⁵⁶ Posttraumatic stress disorder

⁵⁷ Getting PTSD status to people who were in the war, and derived from it benefits status, happened very easily.

some kind of authority, giving your kids a positive picture. A mother is not enough. Usually the whole job falls to the mother in those situations and then the mother cannot give what is natural to her, and that is love but she has to give authority and she is taking up the care, or the male function and the kids are without love. That is the biggest problem. And latter on that is manifested through their socialization.”

(Soldier 2)

As this example shows to work is the only possibility to be a socially productive man, to be a good husband and a role model to children. These kinds of masculine practices also essentialize the woman as the feminine object in the family unit whose natural role is to nurture. This also shows how defenders want tend to wish for a more traditional system of gender relations as a legitimate one.

This in a sense establishes class difference and masculinity produced through it as a key important factor in group distinction between my interviewees. Later it emerges in different imaginings of what a good Croat should be and were to draw the line. The same Soldier as in the previous situation feels not ashamed of participating in the war (when it was waged on the Croatian soil), but he does feel ashamed of what the Defender category has become, so ashamed that he refuses to use it.

(talking about his friend going to Bosnia) That was this shock for me, the first time I saw the difference between patriotism and nationalism... For me patriotism is when you can fight for your homeland with Serbs and Muslims, and nationalism is something used by HDZ at the time to force people to go to Bosnia ... A patriot was fighting for the (Croatian) state. ... Today when you mention a defender it is a stigmatized person, and that is a very bad thing, form that pride (to) when I was

looking for a job I did not mention that I was a defender, on the job market I did not mention that I was a defender (Soldier 2)

One of my more talkative interviewees, a soldier during the war and now a professor in higher education, stated the difference between him and what he perceives to be the defenders. In this move he constructed the other, the one who is more barbaric opposed to him and his guys who are urban and rational.

(talking about comments from other people on the field who were boasting about wanting to kill Četniks) At the end of 1991, it was apparent that it would not be good, for us to identify with Thompson (commenting with disapproval of Thompson) ... it did come later in the war but only through *spridancija*.⁵⁸ In our neighborhood... in the café, because we were *kvartovski dečki*,⁵⁹ the same generation, that is how we started the club (basketball club) ... there was a recruiting center there (in the neighborhood) and the guys that were coming there were searching of cafes, they came to us. And this fat guy with the machine gun, we exchanged words and did not let him in with the machine gun. One was also there who pierced the glass (window)... This was a problem because my wife was in the neighborhood, my kids were growing up, and you're going to fire a gun in my neighborhood? Fire somewhere else, thank god, and not here! ... And then we come to Merčep,⁶⁰ and I must say it is not easy for me to get over that, and he has the right to vote as same as you. I would shoot, and I would shoot at them (the Serbs), I am an excellent shoot, but here it was about something else, and there was no chance. When we went to Grubar the youngest person (living

⁵⁸ the meaning of the word is roughly "making ironic jokes"

⁵⁹ neighborhood guys

⁶⁰ A military commander in the Croatian army who is accused and trialed for war crimes on the territory of Croatia, comes from the rural part of Croatia called Borovo Naslje

there) was 62. How could it happen to you that you stab a granny seven times?... They attribute that to primitivism, but there is a cure for that to. There was this situation with this intellectual with a nationalistic Croatian line, and he has a house in Zadar. Our people robbed him because he had a Serbian surname, and then you can see how far this madness goes. I do not have a class for such idiots. (Soldier 3)

This narrative clearly show the need of this Soldier to delineate himself from the different kind of soldiers than himself by stating his belonging to the middles-class, urban population which is different from people who he considered to be rural (Merčep) and suburban (Zadar vandals). He did go to war and he has this legitimacy, but in another sense he tries to show that he was did not perform a violent masculinity in the war as opposed to those who were.

A similar pattern as in Schmitt's of friend and enemy distinction arises, in the narrative of what it levels of what means to be a good citizen of the Croatian state. Subjects I have identified as soldiers mostly show narrative practices of distinguishing themselves from what they imagine are defenders. In post-war perceived it is their strategies that are strategic and productive, or rather hegemonic. They are the middle class, opposed to the working class, which is not working but has a similar legitimacy in their practices due to the still dominant defense discourse. A rather different distinction is made in opposition to the defender group by the peace activists, who view these people through their lens of partial resistance to the dominant political discourses. One of them who had professional encounters with defenders during and after the war comments:

“(The group of defenders) is a very manipulated, and bought and bribed group, especially by the HDZ, and I would say they (the defenders) see it more and more, there are too many too young and too capable people who are in retirement. I would say that if you want to make a junkie or an alcoholic of somebody you should do that

to him. You just have enough money to get drunk every day... They felt a kind of violence to an extreme, they were in a position to kill somebody, and were in a position to be killed and from that perspective, a lot of us do not have this experience. Like that they are very interesting to me, especially because of the credibility especially towards some other groups (political and activist groups who tend to talk about the war). If a Defender would say the war is evil, a lot of people in the society will understand that message very clearly.” (Peace Activist 2)

Other peace activists do not have such an understanding and favorable seeing in them as the other which is problematic for, what they believe is, a progressive westernized society where there is no place for another “species of people”.

“I view all those people (Defenders) as a mobilization tools for the HDZ. Now I see them as another species of people, so in that sense I formally fulfill all the requirements for what is called prejudice.” (Peace activist 5)

Stef Jansen an anthropologist who has done extensive research on nationalism in Croatia and Serbia, with a specific focus on the urban areas of Zagreb and Belgrade during the late 1990s, also points out a trend of urban pedigree (Jansen, 2005: 138) which delineates real urban subjects from rural newcomers, and from those who lived in suburban areas of town. They are viewed as the barbaric other who are the root cause of nationalism, which is this sense viewed by them as a negative force. Jansen also notices the academic sphere which achieves the same delineation from those who are involved in nationalist practices. (ibid. 138)

The defender category is something that allowed the working class subject to fight for a better position in the Croatian society. The hegemonic defensive discourse gave the legitimacy for a hegemonic position of their practices. This was especially due to the fact that

most of the practices taken on during war time did not have the same hegemonic meaning during the post-war period, but instead were derived to a complicit position, opposed to middle class and upper class masculinities.

In the contemporary context of Croatia I've focused on different male subjects and their masculine practices. I have noticed that the discourses are not as clear cut as in times of war, but some class and cultural (in a sense of urban/rural) and educational differences stay strongly connected to these subjects. These are also places that work in unison to produce the friend /enemy distinction within the Croatian community, allowing different imaginings of what the Croatian society is, and what it means to be a citizen of it. Also the Serbs still remain as the other who could strike at any time especially when viewed from the Defender perspective. Acceptance of the Serbs is something that could be detected through the narrations of the Peace activist, and some of the Soldiers, mostly as a delineating point to the Defenders. All of these examples go in line with Greenberg's and Alonso's analysis of the Serbian and Mexican context, where they detect this struggle between masculinities for hegemonic position. Furthermore Sasson-Levy's evaluation of the double bind also applies; the Defenders are in a position of lower class within the peace time Croatian society which is legitimized through the discourse of them sacrificing for the nation and the violent (and in peace time unacceptable and marginalized) masculine practices that go with that discourse.

Conclusion

In my thesis I have argued for class distinction in participating and narrating violent conflicts surrounded by strong nationalistic discourses. Positioning this within biopolitical framework I have shown how the masculinity distinction has a function within a modern nation-state context in regulating certain parts of the population. Through the thesis I showed the connection between violent masculine practices and their connection to hegemonic masculinity within the Croatian context of war. I also problematized the ambiguity of being in the position of a soldier, who is in one sense a holder of sovereign power to kill, and in another bare life which can be killed when viewed from the position of the opposing sovereign entity. If this situation is viewed from the position of the state, it can be viewed as a sacrifice for the nation and in that sense he is not deduced to bare life, but in a practical front line situation, due to the situation of two sovereign entities in conflict, he can partly be viewed as that because the only options he has is killed or be killed.

This kind of violent masculinity became problematic in the period after the war because it other legitimate masculine discourses became visible and for some of the subjects who were in the war they gave other possible hegemonic masculine practices which were now not connected to violent practices but to practices of economic and knowledge production. In the specific context of Croatia a strong discourse of defense of the country is still present and it prevents the subjects (defenders) who today identify with it to be partially empowered on the political level. But also by accepting this discourse they are regulated and subjectivized by the Croatian biopolitical regime, a situation in which they are legitimately marginalized and in which they accept this fact in the name of the nation. This subjectivization is also brought upon by discourses of human rights coming from within (NGO), but also from the outside (ITCY and EU) the nation-state. In order to keep themselves safe from prosecution for

possible criminal charges, due to the possible crimes they have committed in the war, they keep in line with the discourse of defense which was and still is a strong discourse which legitimizes their practices in the past and their practices now.

The limits of my thesis are that I concentrated on the urban population of Zagreb. Zagreb was never on the front line but this gave me greater insight in to how nationalistic discourses function to mobilize people, as opposed to just being thrown in a potential bare life state when the war comes to a person's doorstep. Furthermore I only concentrated on population which was most affected by the discourses of nationalism, by accepting it or resisting it, and left out a majority of men (and women) who practiced different practices during the war out of the research. These were men who did not want to go to the frontline of the war and found ways to evade it. Women, in this context, some of whom did go to the front in various roles, were dominantly perceived as objects of defense, literal or symbolic.

Also by focusing on the urban (Zagreb) masculinities, I left a great Croatian regional space unexplored. This especially concerns the rural masculinities of whom Michaela Schäuble talks about in her work, and opposed to my research on urban masculinities, stresses religious influences as constitutive in their case. (2009.) The final possibility I see coming out of my work is the comparative research on violent masculinity construction in the war torn part of the ex-Yugoslavia. This would give a more detailed account on the processes of othering between the groups and on which elements these practices are build upon. These is hinted in the work of Dubravka Žarkov who talks of different imaginings of the Croatian and Serbian masculinity read out of media discourses of the wartime period. (2001.)

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